BE SURE AND READ "IONE MATHER'S CRIME" IN THE NEXT LEDGER ISSUE
BOYS, WATCH FOR "HOT-HEADED HENRY" NEXT WEEK. IT'S A GREAT STORY

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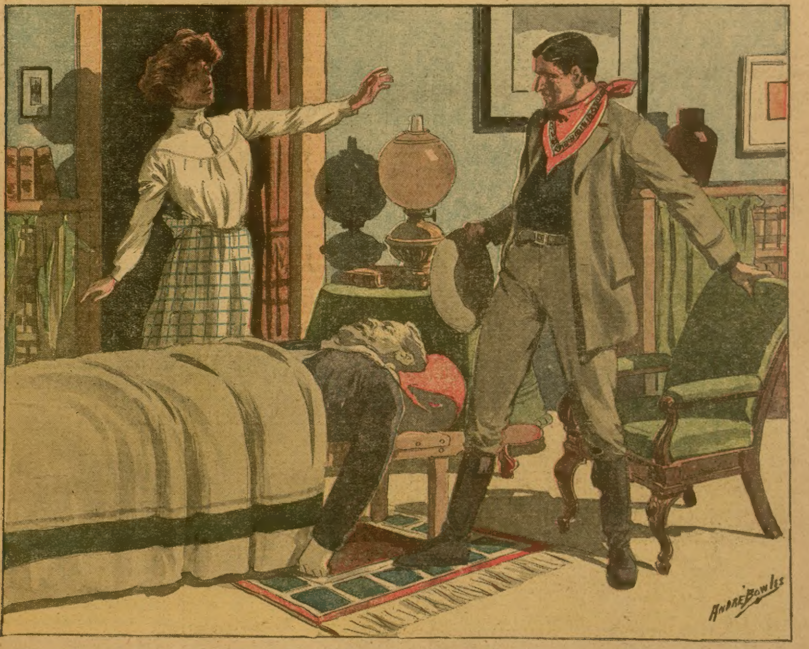

OLD SATAN'S GAL;

Or, The Spy of the Muskalong

By WILLIAM T. BARTWICK

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CHAPTER I.

A SHAMELESS DEED.

"GIVE him time to pray."

A crowd of weird figures were silhouetted against a murky night sky; tall pines nodded to the March wind, while weird shadows danced across the water as it rippled between the banks of the Muskalong.

It was a scene never to be forgotten by the participants in a border tragedy, the aftermath of which was to ring down the aisles of Time with its wild and bitter revenges.

Time to pray! What seething sarcasm, when the bound and helpless victim of man's inhuman cruelty felt his whole soul on fire to avenge the insults heaped upon him.

"Cut his hide to strings!" hissed the envenomed voices of the chief actor in this wild night scene.

"But, Captain Balder——"

"Shut your mouth, Gene," snarled the thick lips of Balder, the hardest taskmaster among the pines, he whose word was law to a thousand gnarled, strong-limbed heroes of the woods and swales, a man who had not a drop of the milk of human kindness in his makeup; a man who, with the swagger of a sea-rover, proceeded to levy tribute on those weaklings of the woods who trembled at the pronouncement of his name.

And this man, a veritable land-pirate, was scowling now, while he viewed with folded arms the brutal whipping of a man whose only offence had been the assertion of his right to breathe the free air of the pine woods, to set his foot in the Government district where no man owned the land, and where the rights of one individual were as good as another's.

Fallon Ockrood had invaded the great Northern forest in quest of game. Ostensibly he was trapping for beaver, the fact being that he had been sent as a spy to learn something about the doings of certain unscrupulous land thieves who had long trampled on the laws of a lax and overhumane Government.

Ockrood had been seen plunging here and there among the camps when intercepted and questioned by one of the great buccaneer's hirelings. It is possible that the young man was a trifle heady in his replies to the other's questions. Howbeit trouble came from the interview and Ockrood was peremptorily ordered out of the woods. He did not go. Why should he? He was wronging no man; was ranging alone over Government preserves, and allowed no man to dictate his actions.

When the report reached Captain Balder he at once began to investigate. In consequence the fearless intruder was arrested in his career of observation, summoned to an amphitheater on the bank of the Muskalong, and ordered to give an account of himself.

This he refused to do.

"I am under no obligations to make known my plans to you or anybody else," declared the young rover when brought before the great Mogul of the pine woods.

"You refuse to give an account of yourself, eh?" growled the pinewoods pirate chief.

"I certainly do."

"I think you can be made to speak."

There was a covert threat in the remark that did not please the prisoner. He felt no fear, however. In this age, even in the woods, law and order was supposed to prevail. Ockrood was a man of undoubted courage, otherwise he would not have been sent on his present mission.

The manner of his being made to speak has been hinted at in the opening scene of our o'er true tale. Stripped to the waist and bound to a tree with moosewood thongs, one man, a sinewy blacksmith, who was completely under the influence of his master, raised a big blacksnake whip, sent its thin, knotted lash with a cutting spang through the air, and awaited final orders.

Eugene Thackwood, the young surveyor, was man enough to put forth a word of remonstrance, only to be silenced as we have seen.

"You have one more chance to receive mercy, Fallon Ockrood, if that be your name," said the lumber king in a voice that rumbled like distant thunder. "Promise to quit this vicinity at once and forever, and you shall be spared, refuse, and the lash shall cut your hide to bloody strings. You have three minutes to decide."

The speaker drew forth a heavy gold watch and studied the dial by the light of the flaming bonfire. A score of dark faces, underscored by red and gray woolen swankies, stood in grim relief against the murky background.

"Fire away," growled a voice.

Balder turned angrily upon the interrupter, crushing the presumption with a curdling glare of the eye. Back to the ticking timepiece sped the gaze of the captain.

"You have had my answer to your browbeating," coolly returned the prisoner. At the same time he was seen to shudder, while his face grew from ruddy brown to the hue of death.

"Poor fool——"

"Only remember this," broke from the lips of Ockrood. "I shall not take this barbarism in peace. Dare to draw a drop of my blood with your black whip and I'll live long enough to kill you!"

"Do your duty, Abe," said the captain.

Up rose the bared arm of the blacksmith. When it came down there was a whir as the deadly lash cut the atmosphere; then followed the slap of the knot as it indented the brown flesh of its victim. Once, twice, thrice did the arm of the blacksmith rise and fall. A crimson stain ran down from the shoulders of the bound man. He writhed and ground his teeth, but uttered no outcry. Balder halted his henchman with a wave of his knotted hand.

"You see that I am a man of my word," spoke the timber king. "There is yet a chance for repentance. What say you, churl?"

No reply was vouchsafed to the words of Captain Balder. He nodded his shaggy head and the executioner proceeded with his lashings, nor did he cease till the barred body of Ockrood was a mass of slit and broken flesh, with the red blood besmearing his clothing and the bark of the tree against which the victim rested. With a grim smile the pinewoods buccaneer warned off the blows, and bending over his victim, asked if he was ready to comply with his orders. No word of acquiescence or defiance was returned. The bleeding victim of the self-appointed executioner neither moved nor spoke.

Thrusting his clinched hand against the bleeding breast of his helpless victim, Captain Balder hoarsely growled: "What say you now, youngster?"

"Fore Heaven, boss, can't you see that he has fainted?" uttered a voice in the other's ear.

Young Gene Thackwood pressed to the side of his chief and laid a hand against his arm.

"Fainted!" jeered the big man of the woods. "What right has he to play a woman's part? Give him another dose, Stringer, and see if we can't wake him up."

"For heaven's sake, man, do you know what you are doing?" gasped the horrified surveyor. "Would you add murder to your other disgraceful work?"

The boldness of Thackwood in thus protesting the work of his superior was a surprise even to himself. His indignation surely got the better of his discretion. Balder turned upon the speaker and smote him not lightly across the cheek with his bared hand. The blow staggered the young man. He braced himself, however, his cheek reddening with anger.

"Take that, you silly fool!" snarled the big outlaw. "Stand back now and keep your mouth shut." This insult rankled deep. Gene, as cheerful a young fellow as graced the camps on the Muskalong, was not proof against justifiable wrath. He stopped not to palter with his fears, but let go a straight arm jolt, one that benumbed his arm to the shoulder when his fist came in contact with the scowling visage of his employer. And Captain Balder dropped his length upon the sod. One blow deserved another, although Thackwood had suffered sneers and sarcastic remarks from this king of timber thieves, he was not willing to tamely submit to a fistic chastisement at the hands of any living man. The moment Balder dropped, the young surveyor quitted the circle of firelight at a single bound and disappeared in the shadows.

Not a man moved to intercept the daring youngster. More than one ejaculation of surprise fell, however, as well they might, since Balder had hitherto been regarded by every man of his crew of over a thousand souls as invincible.

When Balder regained his feet every man present uttered a horrified word of protest at the wickedness of the man who had dared strike the sacred person of the boss.

"Where is the hound?"

The savage eyes of the speaker scanned the faces about him.

"He's gone, boss. He darted away like a deer," said one.

"That's what he did, the coward."

"Aye, he is a coward to strike a man unawares and then run for it," murmured the boss. "Let him go for now; he shall get his punishment when he shows up again."

The speaker turned to where the bleeding and insensible Ockrood hung in bonds against the tree. A man knelt and was chafing the hands of the victim.

"Is he playing possum?" jeered the heavy lips of Balder.

"No, boss," said the kneeling man. "I reckon he's stone dead!"

CHAPTER II.

"OLD SATAN'S GAL."

The giant lumberman started at the ominous words of his underling.

"Dead! Fiddlesticks!" he snorted. "Such carrion ain't easy to kill."

"But he's dead as a nail, all the same, boss," declared the kneeling man. Balder bit and gnawed his bearded lip, his goggle eyes fairly burning with the disturbed feeling that saturated his beastly soul.

Balder himself drew his minion aside and knelt down to make personal examination. He soon came to his feet and gave orders for the men to disperse. Slowly the men of the skidways receded into the shadows; the bonfire died down and one huge bulk stood alone in the semi-darkness scanning the bleeding body at his feet.

With his own hand the lumber king had cut the thongs binding his victim. He regarded the heaped body for several seconds, spurning it at length with the toe of his heavy boot.

"Dead, is he?" welled in a growl from the lips of the land-pirate. "Well, if it be so he has only himself to blame. He may rot in the woods for aught I care. No man shall come sneaking in here to interfere with my plans. If he is a Government spy he deserves his fate."

The speaker cast one lingering glance at the silent form, then turned and strode into the shadows.

A night bird piped his hollow note, while the croaking of early frogs followed in dismal cadence. The gentle sway of the tall pines moaned an accompaniment, fitting requiem over the corpse of one untimely slain.

A sound falls on the air not like the others; it echoes across the water and soon, with the first peeping of a belated moon above the treetops, there glides to view on the purpling stream a slender ashen canoe. Its one occupant tosses her fluttering ebon locks from her keen and sparkling eyes as she sends her craft grating upon the sand.

"A bonfire," mutter rosy lips as an agile form bounds across the slope and comes to a halt beside the murdered trapper.

The girl stirred the embers with a fagot and soon had an illumination that rendered all nearby objects plainly visible.

A low cry of startled surprise fell from the girl's lips when she caught sight of a man's form lying face downward in the dead grass.

The girl shuddered and drew away with a gasp. She trembled and staggered aside. Her slender fingers pressed her white throat as if to still the wild leapings of a startled heart.

"Who is it, I wonder?"

Calming herself with an effort Ellen Forbes went back to the side of the fallen man. She made a brief yet thorough examination. A horrible tragedy had been enacted in the shadow of the pines. Who were the criminals, what their motive for such wickedness, she could not conjecture.

At first she thought the man dead. Her gentle hand went to a position over the heart, followed closely by the down-bent, pearly ear. The faintest pulsation gave the joyful intelligence that this victim of backwoods cruelty still lived.

With Ellen Forbes to think was to act.

She raised the slender form of the insensible Ockrood and bore it with faltering steps down the slope to her waiting canoe. Two minutes later and she was on the water, bearing the logger's victim to a place of safety.

The home of Ellen was at least a mile up the stream. The girl did not go directly thither since she had doubts about the reception she would meet with at the hands of her father, Satan Forbes, the one man in all the north woods whom King Balder feared.

"Old Satan" bore a reputation even more terrifying than that of the lumber king himself. In a certain way he was a man of mystery.

Beneath the roof of a deserted shingle shanty the girl deposited her find, and closing the rickety door she hastened her steps homeward. Reaching the large log constructed house on the creek, Ellen noted the glow of light from her father's room and was pleased to find him still up, doubtless nodding over his books. Old Satan was something of a bookworm, having a considerable library hidden in his den beneath the eaves of his rather pretentious home.

Ellen ran free through the woods and dales. Old Satan paid little heed to her going in and coming out, although he was insanely jealous of his daughter's beauty and knowledge of books, which was not possessed by another girl in that region of country.

Satan raised his grizzled head at sound of a gentle tap on his door. "Come in, Ellen," he said, dropping his book and straightening his long limbs with a sigh.

"You are out late, my child," he said a trifle sharply. "I thought I warned you not to keep such late hours, Birdie. Who knows what may not happen to you out in the woods at this time of night? Wolves and panthers are not as dangerous as some of the human species I wot of. Ellen Forbes, where have you been?"

"Riding on the river, Daddy."

The girl lifted her chin and faced the parent with a plainly marked spirit of defiance. The clash did not come at once, however. Ellen Forbes, as she stood there in the light of the tall student lamp, showed markings of a queen among women. She was strikingly beautiful, with her seal-brown eyes, shaded by long curled lashes, hair of midnight blackness, waving in shallow ripples away from as creamy a brow and full, yet delicate cheeks as the loveliest of city belles.

Her features were not quite regular, with that strict regularity of the Grecian which is so much admired by some; instead, there was a touch of the retrousse about nose and lips, a curled half smile over all that warned one of sweet good nature, tempered by a self will that might break into a wild storm on sufficient provocation.

"But that is dangerous sport, Ellen," said the parent with a frown. "I trust you will keep off the river hereafter, after nightfall at least. Go to your room now; it is too late to talk. Tomorrow——"

"But I must talk, Daddy," broke forth the girl, her cheeks flushing, her brown eyes flashing. "I have something to tell you."

"Tomorrow will do as well. Go now——"

"Now, I must speak now, this minute," declared pretty Ellen, with a stamp of her slender foot. "I have had an adventure, Daddy. A man has been fearfully injured; I rescued him from where he had fallen, and bore him to the old shingle house. You will go back with me and see what can be done. He may die if not at once aided by doctor and nursing."

Ellen spoke with a swift rattle of words, not giving her parent time to break in. She advanced now and stood at his side, her eyes beaming great lights of sympathy and eagerness, her slender form agitated with the depth of her emotions.

"What foolishness is this?" he began. She stopped him with a quick clutch of the arm.

"Come, Daddy, come, there is no time to be lost."

The old man sat firmly in his chair, however. Her appeal had fallen upon deaf ears. She grew fretful with this balking of her wishes.

"You must come to the rescue, Daddy," she urged. "The poor man may die if he is not helped. He has been beaten by some inhuman wretches——"

"Go to your room, child," commanded the man, pushing her from him.

Ellen turned on her natty heel, her red lips pouting. She bit her tongue till it bled, whirling across the room, out through the open door, slamming it spitefully to behind her.

"She has her mother's temper, all right," half chuckled the dreamer. He turned to his books once more, never apparently dreaming that his pretty young daughter would think of disobeying.

But Ellen had not been called "Old Satan's Gal" without reason. She had a mind of her own, with a will to do when the time for action called this trait into being.

She went to the kitchen, took from a hook the lantern used about the stable, and soon had it lit ready for her tramp. She searched through a corner cupboard from which she abstracted several small bottles, secreting them on her person.

"Daddy is wretchedly obstinate," muttered she as she stepped once more into the open air. The moan of wind among the pine tops was solemn enough to give one the shudders. It was half a mile to the shingle shanty. This being her objective point, Ellen hurried her steps along the wagon trail, never once glancing back to note that a man, who had just entered the clearing, stood dumbly staring after her retreating form.

"Old Satan's gal, by hokey!" and the man pursed his lips and whistled.

He watched her till she had disappeared in the woods, when he turned in time to note that the light so long shining in Satan Forbes' window had been extinguished.

"So the old duffer drops to slumber while his gal goes cavorting about the woods after night like a doe on the Licks. Well, by thunder, this promises something interesting. I hadn't ought to have expected to find the bookworm at his feed so late. I'll let him pass for now and see what my ladybug is up to at such an hour."

The man, a great bulking fellow, turned and broke into the bush, following in the footsteps of Ellen Forbes.

The girl walked on beneath the moaning pines without one thought of danger to herself. Hers was a guileless nature. Having wronged no one she had no conception of the evil that was in the land, even to the remotest parts thereof.

She soon reached the end of her journey, entered the rickety old shelter of a shingle cabin, and cast the glow of Daddy Forbes' lantern over the spot where she had left the wounded, supposedly dying man.

Vacancy stared up at the girl from the bloodstained shavings on which her find had lately rested. She was very much surprised and a trifle annoyed. She made a thorough search of the place without result.

"Well, I am relieved, anyhow," she breathed. "He was stronger than I thought, and has gone away to find his friends." An instant later the girl started back, shuddering, from a grinning face at the open shanty door.

CHAPTER III.

PORTENT OF EVIL.

"My lady of the woods!" chuckled a burly, sandy-bearded riverman, as he pushed his way across the threshold and confronted the startled young girl. She recoiled, compressing her full nether lip against her even white teeth.

"Captain Balder!" she exclaimed.

"The same, my charmer," and he stood grinning.

"You followed me here?"

"It looks like it, I'm sure, Miss Ellen."

"Why did you follow me? Do you know—"

She broke off suddenly, noting the scowl that darkened his face. She had thought to speak of the wounded man, but discretion held her tongue. She would not give her secret away. Besides, she hated the rough woods pirate, had rebuffed him more than once, and was learning to positively despise him.

"No, I don't know what sends you kiting about the woods at all times of night," he said good-humoredly. "I'm glad to find you here, though. I want a little confab with you, Miss Ellen."

"You can't have it, then."

"Oh, but I think I can, Miss Flutterbug."

He stretched forth a big hand and attempted to grasp her arm. The girl shrank from his touch with a sharp outcry.

"Don't be silly, Ellen," he said with brutal coolness. "If I meant to harm ye I should have struck at the outset. Tell me why you are here."

She stood as a marble statue without speaking. He frowned and gnawed his bearded lip, his red eyes filling with dangerous flame.

"You think old Satan's gal can defy the fates," he jeered. "Be warned in time, my beauty, and don't trifle with Bale Balder; he may not be as lenient as a more tender lover, and then there'll be trouble. The day has been set, you know."

"What day? I don't know what you mean."

"The day for our nuptials."

He bent closer and grinned in her face. She refused to recoil. Her brown eyes met his gaze without the quiver of a lash. She may have feared him a little, she refused to show it, however. Ellen Forbes had met bad men and balked them before now. She had known the lumber king for a year, knew him to be an unscrupulous scoundrel, yet she did not fear him. Her father had seemed to befriend the fierce fighter of the pines, why, the girl had no means of knowing.

"Be careful, Bale Balder. You are not the whole thing in these woods. Government is stronger than an individual."

He started at her words. What hidden meaning lurked beneath them, soft spoken though they were? He clinched his big hands and frowned more than ever.

"High-handed defiance of all the decencies of life will at some time meet its downfall, Captain Balder," she continued in the low, purring voice she knew so well how to use. "Threats, browbeating and brute strength will not always win, even in the woods. There are those who seek justice, men who can strike, and strike hard when the time comes. Think before you leap, or——"

"Suffering cats!" yelled the big boss of the pines, "I'll not listen to silly threats from a mere skimp of a gal. I think you'd best go with me to camp."

He sprang quickly forward and encircled her waist with his brawny arm. She struggled helplessly, uttering several sharp outcries. He jubilated over her helplessness with loud guffaws. At length he pressed his bearded lips to her crimsoned cheek, almost crushing her slight form against his broad chest. Her struggles were as vain as those of a fawn in the coils of an anaconda.

She tried to bite and scratch, to pry her slenderness from out his cruel grasp. He held fast, chuckling and glowering with greedy triumph. For once she had gone fearlessly forth to her doom. The merciless nature of Bale Balder had been known to her for a long time. She was repenting the folly that had sent her to the assistance of an unknown man.

There came a rustling sound, the crackling of twigs, the uplift of the knotted branch of an oak, a dull thud, and Balder released his victim and fell like a clod to the ground.

Panting, purple, breathless, wholly helpless from deadly weakness, Ellen Forbes felt herself reel against the wall, her two eyes staring at a weird and singular human figure that had been suddenly upraised in the dim lantern light. Bared, seamed and blistered arms were outflung, while the feet of the startling figure trampled the fallen logger boss with all the strength possessed by their owner.

"The beast, the coward!" fell quiveringly from the lips of this strange apparition. It had the semblance of a man, but there were bloody seams on cheek and brow, the shoulders still red with the blood of his late scourging. A man, naked to the waist, ruddy with his own shed gore, pallid of face, with mottled yellow hair and insane eyes; no wonder the girl recoiled farther and farther against the log ribs of the cabin.

"Don't fear me, miss—I've killed him; you are safe."

She stood quiveringly regarding the strange being who had come to the rescue at a timely moment. Her full bosom heaved, a sigh of relief falling from her parted lips.

Safe? Yes, she was safe from the infamous logger boss, but what was she to think of this man (if he were a man) towering there in the lantern light, the most weird and frightful figure her eyes had ever encountered?

Her woman's instinct told her much. The horrifying figure was that of the man she had rescued from the outlaws. He had rendered her a service, yet the danger was not wholly past. There was something in the glow of the lacerated one's eyes that frightened the forest girl, brave though she was—a maniacal glare that seemed to glow more deeply as he leaned toward her. She clutched at the wall for support. Then her gaze dropped to the sordid clod at her feet. Was it true that the boss logger was dead? Ellen Forbes shuddered and covered her eyes with her hands.

"I've killed him, miss, and will take you with me; you are pretty. I had a sister once; she was like you, an ebon-haired darling. She was lost on the Lady Elgin. You heard of that, of course."

The speaker's face worked convulsively; the man leaning nearer each moment, his horrible eyes dancing with insane light. A creepy feeling swept over Ellen. She moved to escape the vampire light of those terrible eyes.

"Don't go, miss," and the bloodstained arms were suddenly outstretched to meet the horrified girl. The man on the ground stirred and sat up. He flashed an underbrow glance at his enemy, then crept aside and sprang upright, hurling himself with mighty strength upon the other.

Ellen Forbes uttered a startled scream and ran for life, overturning the lantern in her flight. Outside she paused and listened. Within the old shingle shanty there wrestled two men for the mastery. Oaths and groans came forth, while the tussle of limbs in a struggle for mastery was both horrible and terrifying.

The recluse's daughter felt that her own safety was of paramount importance. She lost no time in quitting the scene of fearful battle.

She hurried on through the woods, not pausing till the glow of her own home light

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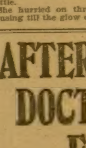

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fretted the darkness. The girl crept in and to her couch without awakening her father. She drew the quilt over her face, commended her soul to her Maker, and dropped into dreamland.

Ellen Forbes was astir at the first break of day.

Her brain was haunted with the adventures of the night. She walked about in a trance of misery. What had been the outcome of that awful struggle in the lone shingle shanty? In a measure, she felt herself guilty of some crime; and yet she had done no wrong.

"Ellen, where did you go last night?"

The voice of Old Satan broke in upon the girl's reveries. He had come in from the barn, where\a horse and cow were stabled. The girl was preparing the breakfast.

"To the old shingle shanty, Daddy," answered she unhesitatingly. The fear of a parent's wrath was as nothing with that awful experience of the previous night.

"And I had strictly forbidden you to stir out."

The frown on the old man's face was meant to be terrifying. The girl stood firm, however, unawed by the sternness in her parent's voice.

"I could not leave a dying man without an effort to save his life," she said, with a deep sense of having done her duty.

"Tell me about it, Ellen."

His frown softened, his voice falling to a gentle cadence. This surprised Ellen, who was used to her parent's ugly moods.

She lost no time in placing her parent in full possession of the facts. The face of Satan Forbes was a study when the girl had concluded her story, He resumed his hat and turned away, not commenting on the tale told by sweet Ellen.

"Are you going far, Daddy?" she asked.

"Only to the shingle shanty, pet."

"Wait, breakfast is almost ready."

"It can stand till I get back."

With that the lean old recluse strode across the threshold and was soon threading his way among the pines. Ellen went to the door and watched her parent go. Something told her to keep her eye upon him till the dense foliage hid his form. Ellen loved her stern old father; he had not always been good to her, yet there were times when he softened and cuddled her to his heart, weeping over her, telling himself how precious to his soul was sweet Ellen, the last of his family circle. His ways were often a puzzle. That there was some mystery in the old hermit's life, his daughter firmly believed, a mystery that was destined to never be revealed.

Ellen did not hurry her work, dallying in hopes of the speedy return of her parent.

Old Satan did not return. An hour passed. Ellen became restive under his continued absence. She drew up to the table, ate a few mouthfuls, then shoved back and began clearing the cloth.

Satan Forbes was eccentric; his ways were those of a man who had hidden in his soul emotions not given to the light. Knowing this, Ellen decided not to wait breakfast. She placed the stew of venison in the oven to keep hot against her parent's return, after which she went about the work of the day. The March sun broke at length through the clouds, filling the little clearing with welcome light.

Ellen was stirring the soil in a newly spaded flower plat when she suddenly remembered the lateness of the hour. No parent yet. He had gone to the shingle shanty where, on the previous night, she had witnessed a terrible battle between human fiends. What had been the outcome of that dreadful struggle? A haunting fear possessed her.

The girl straightened up from her task and turned her gaze down the lonely wagon trail. Objects were moving along this, coming directly toward her. A strange cavalcade it was—four stout men, bearing between them something on a litter. The heart of Ellen Forbes filled her throat when she realized that a dead form lay upon that slowly-moving litter.

CHAPTER IV.

FACING A CRISIS.

Ellen Forbes did not faint when those stalwart men bore the dead form of her parent across the threshold of her home. She was in robust health, a genuine native of the woods. There came a wild throb of her heart, a dark film across her vision, then, tearless and calm she inquired how it had happened.

With doffed hat Thackwood told how the old man of the woods had been found dead within the shingle shanty, a knife wound in his heart.

"And there were others in the place?" she inquired with lifted eyes.

"Others?"

He slowly shook his red-gold head.

"Was not Bale Balder there?"

"No living soul, Miss Forbes. We found the father lying across a pile of roughwood, quite dead. Have you reason to believe he was tired of life?"

A pitying look shot from the blue eyes of the young surveyor.

Ellen averted her face. She was mastering her emotions with an effort. "Old Satan" had never won the deepest affections of his child. He had treated her with severe sternness most of the time, and the love of a girl's heart had never been fully his. With all his eccentricities, Satan Forbes had gone to his last account. It was terrible to think about and Ellen was in a measure overwhelmed.

"You hint at suicide?"

The dark eyes of the young girl were lifted, her chin held low like the curbed Arab of the plains when mounted by his master. Her full bosom rose and fell with heart-moving emotion. He admired her thorough mastery of self under trying conditions.

"I have thought——" he began, she breaking in with a short, sharp gesture, her mouth writhing in hard curves across her large, yet even teeth.

"Not for a moment think that," she breathed forcefully. "Daddy would have been the last man to do a coward's deed."

"Then he has been murdered."

It was an ugly word, yet he felt that he must speak his thoughts. She shuddered and covered her face with her check apron. A choking sob welled up from her full, thrush-like throat; she reeled aside and sank to a low chair. Her emotions had at last won the victory—Ellen cried like a sick child. Thackwood moved to the door, his golden head uncovered. The three men who had accompanied him stood without, consulting. One was Stringer, who had wielded the blacksnake on the previous night.

"What's the word, young feller?" asked Stringer.

"The coroner first."

"And a preacher?" suggested one of the others.

"Later, of course," assented Thackwood.

After a short consultation the three men departed, leaving the surveyor alone with the orphaned girl. He had met her on a few occasions before. He remembered her as a red-cheeked, wildwoods lass, who was the chief merrymaker among the maidens at the country dances. She was in deep trouble now and his heart went out to her in commiseration.

When he again entered the house Ellen was up, leaning over her dead, the stain of a tear across one plump yet pallid cheek. She gazed long and earestly at the silent visage of the dead. Turning presently, she faced young Thackwood. He started at the weird, ghostly expression of her face.

"Tell me what you know of this, Mr. Thackwood," she said in a low, hard, unhealthy voice.

"There is not much to tell, Miss Forbes."

"All the more reason why I should know everything."

"I, with three companions, was running a line through the pines when we came upon the old shingle shanty. Thinking to find something of interest inside this, I entered. Your father lay dead across a pile of rubbish. I found no evidence of a struggle. There was a wound in his heart; the assassin had made good his escape."

"Be not too sure of that."

"For the time being, of course," compromised Thackwood.

"The weapon—a knife? You found that?"

"I did not, although I made a thorough search."

"And did you not meet a man, or men, near the shanty?"

"No, only the boss, who came down through the woods to see about the line we were running in his interest."

"You mean Bale Balder?"

"Yes."

"How far was he from the shingle shanty?"

"A quarter of a mile at least."

"You questioned him about—about my father?"

The girl's face worked convulsively; she brushed aside a tear and was again calm.

"No. You see, it was before I had found your father that I met the boss. But you do not imagine——"

"No—yes—that is, I imagine a thousand things, have no tangible hold on any. There was another man, I cannot forget that."

"Another man?"

"Yes—one who had been scourged almost to the death by fiends in human guise. Members of that man's crew did it; he, Balder, may have ordered the work. From that this—this horrible deed has been evoked. He may be my father's assassin."

"He?"

"Bale Balder."

"It does not seem possible."

"And the man scourged? Did you know him?"

"Yes, a supposed Government spy named Ockrood. He was nosing about and was arrested by Balder's men."

"And almost murdered by Captain Balder's orders?"

"I am sorry to say that such is the fact."

"You saw all this and did not interfere?"

"I interfered all to no purpose. I think, however, that the spy escaped after his punishment. We all thought him dead——"

"He was nearly so. Those two met at the shingle shanty. Daddy went there to meet them and was murdered. What am I to think?"

"I am sure I do not know. Balder and Satan Forbes were friends——"

"They seemed to be," corrected Ellen, "but I chance to know that the lumber king feared my father."

"This is interesting."

"And I brand Bale Balder as my father's murderer."

The girl uttered her words with cool precision, not looking toward either the dead or the living, only directly ahead where her gaze met a moving form crossing the cleared spot before the house. Ellen hastily passed from the room and stood in the outside March sunshine watching the approach of a man whose white face and matted hair betokened recent encounter with unpleasant elements.

"It is Ockrood!" exclaimed the surveyor, himself stepping into the open air. The man approached with a hesitating step, halting and shading his eyes with an unsteady hand. He had resumed his clothing and presented a halfway respectable appearance. Save for the pallor on his face and the tangled hair above his brows Fallon Ockrood was not in unpresentable state.

He raised his hat as he approached.

"I am here to ask your pardon for the fright I gave you last night," said the spy, "and to assure you that I sincerely appreciate what you did for me."

A not uncomely man was this Ockrood, of perhaps six and twenty.

He stood somewhat bashfully before the pretty forest girl, twirling his hat between his fingers.

"There is no call for apology, Mr. Ockrood," said the girl, her sweet face clouding. "I left you locked in deadly struggle with one Bale Balder. How did you escape him?"

"Easily enough, only it was he who escaped me. He feared the man his bestiality had wronged and he ran like a coward. I found a settler's house and have been well used for the once. I shall never forget your kindness, miss, to a perfect stranger. I am here now to see one Satan Forbes——"

"My father!" The girl recoiled, a deadly whiteness flooding her face. "In there is Daddy." Her voice failed her, she whirled and walked beyond the corner of the house. Since the door stood open Ockrood ventured inside.

He came out presently, pale and trembling.

"My God!" he exclaimed, addressing Thackwood, who stood near watching his every movement. "What does this mean? The old recluse is dead."

"True," assented Thackwood. "Satan Forbes was murdered last night in an old shingle shanty on Storm Creek. What do you know about it, man?"

"Me?" gasped the spy. "What should I know? Murdered, Forbes murdered? No, no, it cannot be," and Ockwood staggered into the open air.

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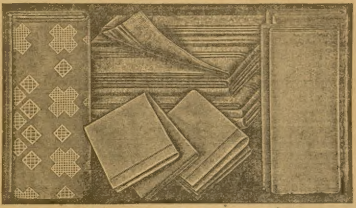

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CHAPTER V.

THE SPY AND THE GIRL.

Ellen Forbes hurried toward the woods, not pausing till she had hidden herself completely from observation. Her brain was in a troubled whirl. There was a sharp pain at her heart, a solemn sadness because of last night's tragedy, that quite forced the girl away from others, into the solitude of utter loneliness.

She stood under the shadow of the trees and tried to think clearly. It was a task not easy of accomplishment. Had there been a great love existing between the recluse and his daughter, the sudden death of the old forester might have prostrated her. At is was, she felt only a fierce desire to avenge the taking off of her parent.

Her reveries were broken in upon by the sound of human voices raised in song. Ellen walked to an opening where an unobstructed view of the wagon trail was to be had.

A lumber wagon was moving slowly down the trail, drawn by a span of army mules. This wagon was filled with red-shirted men. She knew them to be from the river camp not far away, some of the Balder crew. She shrank back, not caring to expose herself to the gaze of these rough sons of the woods. The wagon came on. When it rounded to near the house a man sprang down from the wagon and faced two young fellows who had just at this minute come forth from the house.

"Bale Balder, scoundrel, murderer!"

"The Gov'ment spy!"

Thackwood, fearing an encounter, stepped between the two.

"I command peace," spoke the surveyor, with solemn dignity.

Logger king and his victim could not be thus forced apart. Ockrood twirled the surveyor aside with surprising sharpness and himself faced the burly pinewoods robber.

"Government spy you call me, Bale Balder," hoarsely articulated the late victim of Judge Lynch. "Whatever I am, I have never raised my hand against a human being in anger—not with murder in my heart, at any rate."

Thackwood stood aside, gnawing his lip. There was no denying that the situation was suspenseful.

"You are impudent for one who was spared deserved death," growled Captain Balder.

"Gentlemen," broke in the surveyor, "this is no place for the thrashing of personal spite. You should at least respect the dead."

Ockrood suddenly sprang at the throat of Balder, dragging him toward the open door. For some unexplained reason Balder did not resist this movement on the part of a man seemingly very much his inferior in bodily strength. Through the door to the side of the dead old recluse Ockrood dragged his enemy.

"Look upon your work, you old scoundrel, look and tremble, for, before high Heaven, I swear to place you where the dogs won't bite you during the rest of your natural life."

The pinched face of the dead provoked only a growl from the lips of the lumber baron. He scowled and chewed his red beard when he found himself free from the clutch of the other's hand. The accusing voice of his late prisoner seemed to tingle across his senses with the sting of a whiplash.

"Old Satan has got his deserts at last, eh?" fell sullenly from the lips of Captain Balder.

"His deserts? You scoundrel——"

"Hands off," yelled Balder, when the younger man would have again laid violent hands upon him. "If you killed the old chap you'll have to answer to the law, I'll have nothing to do in the matter. You missed it in not going when you had a chance."

"I have no desire to quit the country until two or three first-class scoundrels are duly and lawfully punished for high crimes and misdemeanors," said Ockrood with drawling coolness.

Balder turned to his surveyor, who had entered and stood at his right hand. From him he demanded an explanation of the present scene. Thackwood told what he knew about the death of Satan Forbes.

"It is murder, and you did the deed."

The voice of the spy again fell solemnly. Balder frowned and lifted a clinched hand threateningly. The younger man did not seem to fear an encounter with his enemy, instead he seemed to invite it.

Baring his bosom, by tearing open his loose hunting shirt, Ockrood shouted: "Strike, scoundrel, strike, but remember that when your hand falls against my person another time you are a dead man!"

"Huh! Do you think I fear you?" jeered the huge lumberman, leaning his scowling face almost against the other. "I thought we thrashed some of your ugly impudence out of you last night. Get out of this or you may feel the lash a second time, and with heavier hand than before."

"No," with a sharp hiss, "you will never lash me again, Bale Balder. I am prepared to shed your blood if you dare again to lift your hand to strike me or mine. Old Satan is dead, you are his murderer—don't start and scowl like an angry fishwoman, what I say is true. I might kill you right here and now, and the law would bear me out in the righteous deed, but I forbear, choosing rather to let the law legally strangle you."

Uttering these words Ockrood turned and strode from the room.

The lumber boss stood for several minutes regarding the face of the dead. At length he turned away muttering. Ockrood paused only to fling a defiant word at the jeering lumberjacks as he passed. Here he ran plump upon Old Satan's Gal.

"Ah, so you are here, Miss Satan!"

The speaker tossed his head and smiled, half in mirth half in fear. He had passed through a thrilling experience during the past few hours. His back still smarted from the lash of the lumber tyrant; somehow, too, he connected his troubles with this girl's father. She, however, had befriended him and he could not judge her harshly. Besides, her parent was dead, and that fact softened him wonderfully.

"You are brave to face them after last night, Mr. Ockrood," said the girl with uplifted, moist eyes.

"It required no courage to face that pack of cowards," he returned.

"Yet, after last night——"

"Yes, after last night," he half roared, his pale face flushing. "That big scoundrel of a Balder has much to answer for. He is a bloody old murderer, and I will get even for what he did to me."

"I hope you may," she said simply.

"And for what he did to you——"

"To me?"

He nodded toward the house in the clearing.

"Oh, then you think——"

(Continued on page eleven.)

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The Massingbird Puzzle;

Or, THE HOUSE OF THE CROSS

By Major Albion F. Grant

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CHAPTER I.

THE CALL.

"YOU'VE been longing for the country, Pelham, so here's a little commission that will give you a sniff of wild honeysuckles, magnolias and that sort of thing."

Gordon Pelham, the young lawyer, looked up from his desk and waited for his partner to proceed.

"Miss Bernice Massingbird of Brompton Court, Virginia, wants her last will and testament drawn. I have never seen the lady. Her father was a client of ours many years ago, long before the Civil War. She inhabits the old family mansion, and, if I am correct, is the last of the Massingbirds."

"The last of her line, eh?" smiled Pelham, as he flecked the ash from his cigar upon the rug at his feet. "I am already interested, Mr. Julian."

"Not much chance for a romance there, I think, for Miss Massingbird is past the marriageable age and——"

"When do women pass that delightful period, may I ask?"

"Oh," laughed the old attorney in return, "that is something the most rigid cross-examination cannot wring from the fair sex. Miss Massingbird lives a short distance from Fenwick, which is a small station on the N. & W. Railway. The region comprises a part of the mountain district of the Old Dominion, and it was pretty well fought over during the 'late unpleasantness.' I have no means of knowing how she looks nor how she lives. She is therefore, an unknown quantity to me. But you may make a few discoveries while at Brompton Court."

Pelham was listening intently.

"She may not have much to devise, like some of the Southern people, once well-to-do, who faced poverty after hostilities. She comes of a noted colonial family, for the Massingbirds have blue blood in their veins and for generations kept house in almost regal state. You will find Brompton Court an old manse despoiled, no doubt of its former grandeur. I shall await your return with a good deal of interest. When can you go?"

"At once," said Pelham.

"That will suit our client exactly, for she advises despatch."

The young lawyer brushed some papers back into the innermost recesses of his desk and took down his hat.

"Of course, I cannot say why she did not employ some lawyer in her own vicinity," continued Julian. "She must have known that the Massingbirds have been our clients before, and thus resolved to place this matter in the hands of her father's counsellors. I think you can catch the train, yet, today."

"All right," responded Gordon. "I am off this minute for Brompton Court."

Pelham found it a longer journey than he expected. The train which puffed out of the city that night did not land him at Fenwick till the afternoon of the following day. He had been chained to the drudgery of the hot office so long that he was glad to see the green fields, the crystal rivers and the clear blue skies unobscured by the black smoke of the teeming metropolis. It was as the dawn of a new day to the young lawyer.

When the train slowed up in front of a rambling platform, upon which stood a contingent of gaping "natives," Pelham flung himself down the steps, grip in hand, and looked around. Julian had spoken truly. He was in the heart of the hills. He thought Julian might have telegraphed Miss Massingbird to have a carry-all or some sort of vehicle for him, but as nothing of the kind was visible, he would have to find his way to Brompton Court by some other means.

As he was debating what to do, there strode out of the little one-horse depot a stately gentleman with a hickory cane, which he began twirling in a thoughtful manner. The moment he spied Gordon he came forward with a pleasant bow.

"I suppose, sir, you are a stranger in these parts," observed the Virginian courteously. "My name is Tolliver, Colonel Tolliver, late of the Confederate army, at your service, sir."

At the same time the speaker held out his hand, which Pelham took as he bowed.

"I am Gordon Pelham of Philadelphia, and your surmise that I am a stranger in these parts is correct."

"I thought so. May I ask if you have relatives here, Mr. Pelham?"

"I have no relatives in the South. I am here on a little business, and, since I am a total stranger here, I shall have to trouble you for some information."

"Any information I can give is yours, sir."

"I am seeking a place called Brompton Court——"

"Quite a distinguished place, sir," interrupted the Virginian. "It has a history which is as yet unwritten. You are not an author, sir?"

"No, sir."

"Neither are you a mere sightseer. I can see that by your address. Brompton Court is about three miles back," and the Colonel indicated the direction by a gesture. "Was Miss Massingbird expecting you?"

"In a manner, yes," was the reply.

The curiosity of the Colonel was increased by these words.

"Well, sir, since she is not here to receive you, I shall have my man drive you out. Dick?"

A young colored man, who had been regarding Pelham with a good deal of interest, came forward and awaited further orders, hat in hand.

"My own home is but a few steps away," continued the Virginian. "If you will accompany me thither, Dick will soon have the carriage out and you will be on your way to the Court."

"You are very kind, sir."

"You will oblige me, sir, by not mentioning it," was the response. "You will find true chivalry in the Old Dominion. It is a second nature with her people."

In another moment Pelham was walking beside the Colonel toward a large brick house visible through a clump of trees. He had a good opportunity to study his new acquaintance. Tolliver was a man of perhaps sixty, tall and stately, with long grayish hair which rested lightly on the broad velvet collar of his coat, which must have dated several decades back. He wore the planter mustache and goatee and his hands were as clean as a woman's and very small.

He impressed Pelham from the first, but in after days he was to know the man better.

"Here we are," said Tolliver, as they reached a long porch which ran the full front of the house. "Dick has gone to hitch up the team. Take a seat, sir."

There were two chairs on the porch, which was shaded by a magnificent vine of Virginia honeysuckles in full bloom. The perfume they imparted was delightful.

Pelham took one of the chairs and placed his grip on the floor beside him. He looked around and saw that though the place had suffered somewhat, perhaps from inattention, it was a stately place for all that, and he began to admire its owner, who, though dressed in garments not of the latest mode, had all the visible attributes of a high-minded, old-style gentleman.

"So," began Colonel Tolliver with a covert glance at Pelham, "you are to become Miss Bernice's guest?"

"Not for very long," was the reply. "As soon as I have transacted the business in hand I shall post back."

"So? Of course you have never met the lady of Brompton Court. She seldom goes away from home. I can't say when I saw her last. Wait, I do believe it was the day we made a stand in her yard against a Yankee regiment. She is the last of the Massingbirds, you see, and inhabits a house which had another name besides Brompton Court."

"Another name, you say?"

"Yes, locally and far and wide, I might add, it is called the House of the Cross."

"A very singular title," observed Pelham.

"The name comes from a red cross which is set in the wall over the front doors. It is said that the builder of Brompton Court had the sign placed there, but this may be legendary. You will find Miss Bernice a woman of more than ordinary intelligence and—quite along in years, too, a spinster, in fact."

"So I have been informed," said the young lawyer.

"She has few visitors. She does not invite familiarity. I have practiced law in these party many years, but have never had her as a client."

"You knew her father, I presume?" ventured Pelham.

"As well as any one ever knew him," was the reply with a proud toss of the gray head. "He died when Miss Bernice was very young. He was found murdered one morning in the big room to the left of the hall. The Tollivers and Massingbirds were never familiar."

"Was the tragedy never avenged?"

"That, sir, is a matter which we never discuss here," haughtily exclaimed Colonel Tolliver. "You may hear something about it from the tenant of Brompton Court, but I doubt it. Well, here is Dick with the carriage."

Pelham picked up his grip and walked to the edge of the porch.

The vehicle, drawn by two scrawny horses, was one built after the manner of vehicles many years ago. Pelham noticed that there was a gaping rent in the wood of one of the doors.

"A Yankee cannon ball did that," said Tolliver, noticing the young lawyer's glance.

A moment later Pelham was seated in the musty depths of the old carriage, and Tolliver was speaking to the negro in low tones.

"I wish you well, sir," he said waving his hand to Pelham. "But you're going into a devil's cauldron, or my name's not Peyton Tolliver," and with this Dick cracked his whip and the old relic of better days rolled down the dusty road.

CHAPTER II.

A SINGULAR RECEPTION.

It was a new experience for Gordon Pelham.

The road ran through a bit of land ladened with the odors of pine and honeysuckle. Overhead he caught a glimpse of a clear blue sky such as he had not seen for months, and, eager to enjoy the landscape to its full, he clambered out of the lumbering vehicle and took a seat alongside of the dusky driver.

"Have you been long in these parts, Dick?" he asked.

"I was born heah, sah," was the response as the darky's eyes bulged with pride. "I'se one o' de ole Kunnel's niggers."

"I thought so. Then you've been to Brompton Court before?"

"Nevah, sah. Dat's a bad place to go. You see, sah, de ole Majah's father was found dead jes like de son was, an' in de same room."

"A startling coincidence," observed Pelham.

"I doan't know 'xactly what dat is, but hit's de truth. I was jes a pickinny at de time an' kin jes' remembah what a 'citement hit made. De hull county, sah, came down heah and' dey got out ole Massa Lee's dogs, but hit war no use. Dem dogs jes' couldn't hit de trail."

"Then no one was ever arrested?"

"No one, sah. I'se jes' goin' to remark, sah, dat hit war a circumstantious time an' to dis yer day dey am as much in de dark as dey war den."

"How were they killed, Dick?"

"Bouf stabbed in the neck with a long knife an' hit was such a knife as no mortal bein' in dis hull kentry evah laid dere eyes on."

"What was peculiar about the weapon?"

"Hits peculiosity war de thing dat 'stonished de hull settlement. Wal, sah, de blade was jes' as thin as papah. I 'membah seein' Kunnel Tollivah bend it clar back to de hilt. On de handle war a name o' some kind what jes' now escapes my mem'ry. Ole Majah Massin'bird war found sittin' in his chair dead, jes' as his son war found years afterward. An' dey say," and here Dick took a long breath, "dat some time Missa Bernice will go de same way."

"But who would want to kill a lone woman, for I understand that she lives comparatively alone at the Court."

"I kain't answer dat," said the negro. "Ole Massah Tollivah thinks de same."

"I believe he told me that the Tollivers and Massingbirds have never been familiar."

"Dat's so, sah. Long befo' I came into dis world dey jes' draw a line twixt 'em an' de line is dar yit. I kain't explain hit, but it's so, sah."

By this time the carriage rolled into a track of open country and Dick exclaimed:

"Ober dar's de Massin'bird line!" and he pointed across the fields. "I'll take yer to de line an' wait for you. De Tollivah turnout kain't cross de Rubercon."

Pelham smiled to himself and remained silent for a few moments.

"You needn't wait," said he. "It is likely that my business with Miss Massingbird will keep me until tomorrow. I have noticed that the road is not tortuous and I can find my way back without much trouble."

"Jes, as you wish, sah. De leddy's old an' feeble an' not o' much fo'ce besides."

"She keeps servants, though, doesn't she?"

"One or two, but I kain't say for sartin. Dey do say dat from de day dey found her father dead in de big room de door hasn't been unlocked."

A minute later the negro drew up at a certain place in the road and announced that he was at the line of the Massingbird plantation. Pelham alighted and took his grip from the vehicle. Tossing a coin to the darky, he looked in the direction the black finger was pointing and started off.

A few steps brought him to a lane which was bordered by cedars, and at the end of it he descried a little grove in the center of which rose a building of ample proportions. This, he thought to himself, must be Brompton Court.

When he entered the grove he discovered the house in all its ample entirety. It was a commodious brick of colonial architecture, with the usual double veranda, the lower part of which was covered with the odorous Virginia creeper. The shutters of the upper windows were tightly closed and the vines failed to give him a glimpse of the lower ones.

The place looked lonely and uninhabited, there was already an air of mystery about it which grew on Gordon till he found himself at the grayish stone steps of the porch. Then he saw the strange red cross of which Colonel Tolliver had spoken. It was set in the wall over the old-style double door. The cross itself was not upright, but leaned to an angle of forty-five degrees.

So immersed in examination did Pelham become that he nearly forgot his mission and some little time elapsed before he approached the door and lifted the odd-looking brass knocker.

The tones which his action evoked seemed to ring through every nook and cranny of the house. He stepped back a pace and waited. A huge cat, of inky blackness, came from somewhere, and with a wild screech scrambled across the porch.

Presently there came to his ears the sounds of human feet beyond the door, a bolt was drawn, a key grated in the lock and the heavy portal swung open.

The next moment Pelham found himself face to face with a person whom he instantly averred to himself was the mistress of the old manse, Miss Massingbird herself.

It would be difficult to describe this person. She was tall and angular, with a sharp face and a pair of searching eyes, the color of which puzzled Pelham. She wore her hair in frizzles, after the manner of years previous, and her dress reminded the young lawyer of the fashions he had seen in old plates representing the styles of the middle of the last century. Surely this was Miss Massingbird, the acknowledged last of her line.

Pelham deferentially removed his hat and executed a low bow, to which the lady replied with stately grace, and he was across the dreaded threshold.

Without a word he was conducted to a room on the right of the ample hallway and invited to take a seat. There was an odor of mustiness about the place, the shadows of which were not dispelled when the woman parted the curtains of one of the windows that looked out upon the porch.

Miss Massingbird seated herself in a large mahogany chair of antique design, and, crossing her thin hands in her little lap, seemed to wait for her visitor to break the silence.

"Miss Massingbird of Brompton Court, I believe?" said the young Philadelphian.

A stiff bow answered him and then the lips parted for the first time.

"I am the tenant of the Court," said she. "I am Miss Bernice Massingbird."

"I represent the law firm of Conley, Julian and Pelham of Philadelphia."

At this the half buried eyes before Pel-

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ham seemed to get a little life and snap.

"I remember. You have come on the business I wrote about? Yes? I am glad to see you, Mr.——"

"Gordon Pelham, miss."

"My father was once the client of your firm. To my recollection he never employed any other attorneys. Pardon me, you have not dined, I suppose?"

"That is a matter of little consequence to me," replied Pelham, but the occupant of the chair rose and crossed the room.

"We Virginians pride ourselves upon our hospitality," she remarked pleasantly with a glance over her shoulder. "I shall acquaint Venus of your arrival," and with this Pelham was left to himself.

In an incredible short space of time he was asked by Miss Massingbird herself to step into the diningroom. He entered an ample apartment wainscoated in dark oak, where a table stood with a white cloth spread for two.

Miss Massingbird took a seat at the head of the table and poured the tea. This room was much lighter than the one he had just left, and Pelham had a better view of his hostess. There were wrinkles in her face, which, despite the fact that she never had company, she tried to conceal after the manners of an aging society matron. Her fingers were adorned with rings of a past fashion and at her throat a lace collar met to be clasped by a brooch of colonial design.

The meal was soon discussed. There was but little conversation, Pelham remarking on the beauty of the country which he had just traversed, and his hostess replying in monosyllables.

She was more than ever a puzzle to him and he wondered what Julian would say if he could see her.

"You have come, I suppose," she suddenly said, "to draw up the document of which I wrote to your house."

"Such is my mission to the Court."

"Everything is almost decided upon," was the reply. "It is not necessary that it shall be done till morning. You have had a long journey. We will let it go over till then. Now, if you would wish to spend a short time before retiring in the room we have lately left, we will go thither."

Pelham followed at her heels to the little room in the front part of the house. As the door was thrown open the faint strains of music assailed his ears.

"It is Moisy," explained Miss Massingbird. "I will see you at eight in the morning, Mr. Pelham. You will be shown to your room," and with this the antique dress swished away and Gordon was alone in the old parlor.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE PERGOLA.

When Pelham found himself back in the little parlor, where he first heard the voice of Miss Massingbird, night had settled fairly over the scene. He was totally in the dark, but he was not left in that unenviable condition long. A door swung open and a mulatto youth of fifteen entered, bearing a light, a hard wax candle set in a gilded candlestick. He placed his burden on the table and withdrew without so much as a glance at Pelham.

Left again to himself, the young lawyer began to take note of his surroundings. He seemed to have been transported to a strange world. Time had retraced his steps to show him the light of other days. The dark walls were hung with paintings, mostly portraits, family ones, no doubt, for there was one of a stately old man in colonial garb, and near it the face of a woman in her frills of bygone years.

Pelham took the light from the table and moved about the chamber examining the paintings. When this work was done he took note of the furnishings of the room and and at last returned to his seat. He had hardly sat down ere the same door opened to readmit the same noiseless darky boy, who beckoned him forward.

"Bedtime, eh?" ejaculated Pelham, rising. "Now for some more adventures in this house of mystery."

Out into the wide hallway swept the majestic little darky with the lawyer at his heels. They both mounted the old-fashioned staircase, and Pelham said:

"I'm to sleep in an upper chamber, I suppose?"

The boy made no sign that he heard him. On the upper landing he turned abruptly to the right and marched to a door which he opened.

Pelham was ushered into a room of considerable dimensions. A huge bedstead stood at one side of the chamber, and Pelham noticed that its posts almost touched the ceiling, and that a flight of three wooden steps offered to carry him to the snowy counterpanes. He had often heard of these great beds, but this was the first he had ever had an opportunity to inspect.

Immediately he was left alone again.

His had been such a singular experience since entering the old mansion that Pelham was not in a hurry to retire. He looked at everything about the room, and at last came to a conclusion that that particular room had not had a guest from time out of memory.

At last when he sank among the soft feathers of the old bed he had no desire to sleep. Try as he would he could not court the drowsy god, and at last, after several hours of futile efforts, he rose and resolved to sit out the balance of the night.

When he drew aside the heavy curtains of one of the two windows, which he knew must overlook the veranda, he observed that a full moon was in the sky. He could see that portion of Brompton Court which lay directly in front of the mansion. He singled out the vine-covered pergola which stood at the head of the walk and noticed that a gentle breeze was trembling the leaves of the climbers.

All at once there emerged from the pergola, and into the rich moonlight, an object which nearly drew a cry from Pelham's lips. He leaned forward with intense eagerness and his face almost touched the glass of the window.

Under ordinary circumstances he might not have made much of what he saw, but now, housed in a house which had been visited by tragedy, and which was still connected with the mysterious, he looked with all eyes.

The person who had come out of the pergola was a man, but he was not alone. He held in leash a large dog, which Pelham's imagination fashioned into a great bloodhound. The huge figure of the animal was plainly visible, the great, evil eyes set in the ferocious head, the wide collar, which one of the man's hands gripped, the strong limbs of the dog and the long, straight spine.

The man himself was a tall individual, who wore a slouch hat which dropped over the upper part of his face, and all that Pelham could see was a shaven chin and compressed lips. Both man and dog were in the full soft moonshine, and stood out like figures cut in a cameo.

Suddenly the man looked to the right and the animal threw up his head.

From toward a corner of the house came a figure in white, and Pelham was gazing at a young girl who had stopped in front of the occupant of the pergola.

He could not hear what was being said by the pair, but it was evident that they were conversing. He glanced at his watch and noted that the hands denoted ten minutes till one.

Was this young girl, who had a straight, sylph-like figure, the "Moisy" whom he had heard playing as he returned to the parlor after the meal with Miss Massingbird? If so, what was she doing on the grounds at that hour with the brigandish-looking man and the dog? Suddenly he saw the man look upward toward the very window where he stood, as if the girl had referred to him.

Pelham involuntarily shrank back, but upon remembering that the window was cast in shadow, owing to a tree which interposed its top between it and the moon, he moved forward once more. The two below remained in sight for ten minutes when the girl, with a quick gesture toward the house, turned on her heel and vanished.

The dog looked after her a moment and then turned his homely head toward his master.

Hard upon the disappearance of the strange girl the man wheeled, jerking the dog after him and darted once more into the depths of the pergola. His vanishment only sharpened Pelham's curiosity. For an hour he watched the summer house without for a moment removing his eyes from it, but the man did not reappear. Perchance there was another way out of the place, and, thinking thus, at last the young lawyer retreated from his post.

Nature, by degrees, began to assert herself, a drowsiness stole over Pelham and he sought the high-posted bed once more. Sinking into the soft depths of the feathers he almost immediately became oblivious to surrounding objects and was asleep.

All at once he found himself sitting bolt upright in bed with a strange sound tingling his ears. He thought he had heard a wild cry in the night, one which seemed to have come up from below, a cry that was enough to chill the blood in one's veins, and it seemed to die away in accents of awe.

From what he had already witnessed Pelham was ready to believe that almost anything could happen at Brompton Court. If the old manse had two murders to its credit, why not another?

He was instantly in the middle of the room. The candle on the table was burned out and cold. The moon no longer threw its light upon the pergola. In the terrible stillness that prevailed he could almost count the pulsations of his heart.

To think was to act, and Pelham was in the hallway beyond the door. He saw nothing. For all this the cry which he had heard and which he believed was not the unsubstantial creature of a dream, echoed in the depths of his soul.

A minute later he was going down the corridor toward the staircase.

From the heavy carpet that ran the full length of the hall his feet sent up no sound. His hand suddenly came in contact with the crowning post of the stair and then he sprang down the steps.

In after days Pelham wondered at his bravado. What had happened in the old house, and who might be waiting for him below, he did not know; fear did not occur to him.

Halfway down the steps he halted, for a glimmer of light had shot athwart his vision. It came from the room at the right of the staircase and he suddenly remembered that this was the room of the tragedies, and a room which he had been told had never been opened since the death of Major Massingbird.

It took Pelham some little time to collect his scattered thoughts. What should he do—go back to bed and discover in the morning when Miss Massingbird should meet him, what had happened, if anything? He did not stir. There was the light over the door of the musty chamber, and he was now convinced that the cry in the night had come from beyond that forbidden portal.

Inwardly calling himself a coward and shaking loose the last clutching fingers of fear, Pelham went on.

When he struck the floor at the foot of the stair he reached for the brass knob of the door.

Setting his teeth hard, he turned the knob and pushed the door open. A flood of light fell upon his face.

He saw at a hasty glance that this light emanated from two candles that burned in their sconces on an oval table in the middle of the ample chamber. But this was not the only thing Gordon Pelham saw.

On the floor, at the foot of a large armchair, face downward, lay a woman. He saw the silken dress, the lace collar that encircled the wrinkled throat, and the jeweled hand which lay on the carpet, the fingers extended toward him. That he was gazing at the fallen form of the mistress of Brompton Court he did not doubt.

At the table itself stood a figure in white. He noticed the immaculate night-dress daintily gathered at the throat and tied with a pink ribbon. He saw the ruffles at the wrists and noted how gracefully the garment fitted the figure of its wearer. It was the girl he had seen in the moonlight at the pergola! She was holding something in her hand, and at sight of Pelham she threw it upon the table and darted past him, vanished in a flash.

Pelham sprang forward and saw that the object cast upon the table was a dagger, and as he picked it up he heard a sound which caused him to look toward the open door. That moment his heart seemed to shrivel within his body, for on the threshold stood the man with the slouch hat, gripping the collar of a huge dog and grinning like a fiend.

CHAPTER IV.

The sudden and unexpected confrontation staggered Pelham. It was the greatest surprise of his life. Despite the peril which he saw menaced him, he thought of Bill Sikes and his dog Bull's-eye. The dagger which he had picked up fell from his hand and rattled to the floor. The brim of the man's hat was lifted a trifle, but that trifle was enough to show Pelham a pair of deep-set glaring eyes and a beetling brow.

The man in the doorway was the first to speak.

"I'm a little too late," said he, and his gaze dropped for a moment to the inanimate thing that lay at Gordon's feet. "What did you do it for?"

The words were knife thrusts to the young lawyer.

"I have just come in," said he, returning the man's look. "I was called from my room by a cry in the night and——"

"That's a pretty tale," was the interruption. "I don't know how it will be taken in court."

All the resentment in Pelham's nature surged to the fore. He took a step forward, though the dog growled and showed his yellow fangs.

"The woman who just went away——"

The man laughed.

"There was no woman here!" he cried. "There is no woman in the house but Miss Massingbird, and she is there," and his finger covered the form on the carpet.

Gordon half-regretted his speech. He was accusing the girl in white, and really what right had he to do so? She might be the most innocent person in the world.

The man came forward, still leading the dog, and stood over Miss Massingbird.

"It's on the anniversary, too," Pelham heard him say as if addressing himself. "Her grandfather and father were murdered on the same night of the month."

"I know nothing about that."

"Eh? Everybody else knows," was the answer. "Ha! what is this?" and the young Pennsylvanian saw him stoop and pick up the dagger. "You didn't bring this here? You must have found it somewhere in the house."

"I found it on the table where——"

Pelham paused again. He was coming back to the girl once more and he would not incriminate her.

He saw the man hold the blade toward the guttering candles and noticed for the first time that there were dark red stains upon the polished surface.

"A thing like this would take any life. It cuts to the quick and not much blood follows. I don't see what you can have had against the mistress of Brompton Court."

It was in Pelham's mind to meet the words with others which the occasion seemed to demand. He saw how the meshes of fate could be woven about him. He was a stranger in the community; more than this, he was a Northern man and the hatreds engendered by the Civil War had not passed away. In all that region he had no friend and yet if the dead could speak——

Passing around the body on the floor Pelham took a decided step toward the hall.

"You can go to your room, but please don't leave the house," said the man. "My name is Kyd Sloane. I am a constable in these parts."

It was on Pelham's lips to say: "And the man who hid in the pergola!" but he bridled his tongue, and the words were left unuttered.

"I will not run away, I can promise you that," he said instead, looking Sloane squarely in the eye. "When I am wanted I won't be hard to find."

A smile curled the lips of the Southerner, and Pelham passed out of the room into the dimness of the hall beyond.

Pausing there for a moment, he went up the broad staircase and entered the guest chamber with the high-posted bedstead. Finding the bit of candle that remained in the candlestick he struck a light and looked around the room. It seemed at first to be as he had left it, but he gave a sudden start, for his grip, which he had placed on a chair, now rested on the floor. He was sure it was not of his doing. Some one had been in the room after his abrupt departure.

Once, while he listened for sounds from below, he heard the opening and closing of a door, but that was all. What had become of the man and his dog, he did not know.

He went to the window and looked out over the vista now revealed by the first arrows of dawn that were darting through the foliage before the old mansion. He saw the pergola and its blossoming vines and here and there birds were seeking their breakfast among the leaves that littered the ground about the entrance.

The while he stood there, his ire rose unchecked. The words of the man who had called himself Kyd Sloane, rankled in his heart. That such a brute should accuse him of murder was too much to stand without hurling the accusation into his teeth.

In another moment Pelham was at the top of the stair again. His face was strangely white; from his eyes leaped the fire of resolution which he had formed.

Down he went and straight toward the door of the forbidden room.

The door was locked.

Twist the knob as he might, he could not open it and at last he turned away. The door which led out upon the veranda stood slightly ajar, and he went toward it.

In another moment he was on the porch.

"I see you're out again," said a voice, and that moment he beheld Sloane seated in a chair, with the dog crouching at his feet.

The Virginian was on guard.

"It won't be long any more," said he, looking up at Pelham, upon whose lips trembled the defiance which he had carefully considered. "I've sent for them, and me and Lion are holding the fort."

A little laugh ended the sentence, which irritated Pelham to the limit. He strode forward and faced Sloane.

"You must tell me what you mean by your talk," said he. "I will have no insinuations shot indiscriminately into my face. I came to Brompton Court to transact business with Miss Massingbird——"

"Of course, and you transacted it, eh?"

Pelham could have flung himself upon the cool head, but the menace of the dog deterred him. The animal was as strong as his master and it would have been more than two to one.

"Why don't you come out boldly?" he contented himself with saying. "Do you think I killed Miss Massingbird?"

"If you didn't, who did?" was the startling answer.

Pelham leaned toward the man and said,

(Continued on page six.)

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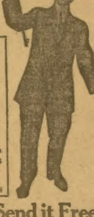

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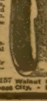

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Mothers have much intrusted to them that concerns the preservation of the health of the community. Upon them largely rests the sacred care of the well-being of the household; and it is there of the utmost importance that they should possess an adequate acquaintance with at least the elementary principles that underlie effective hygienic practice. The physician has after all only a secondary part to play in the maintenance of health; he is called only when some disturbance occurs that is beyond the power and the skill of the usual guardian of the home.

The mother has to care for the diet of the children, both in health and in sickness; she has to see that they are sufficiently and sensibly clothed; and it is her duty to attend to the sufficient sanitary arrangements of the house. She ought to be able to guard against the dangers to which children are exposed, and to make use of effective remedies when accidents befall, as when ordinary ailments of a comparatively trifling character set in. All this presupposes and requires some competent knowledge of the commonest laws of health, and some fair amount of skill in the putting of these into practice. But how often is grievous loss occasioned, and even the sacrifice of valuable lives, by the want of such knowledge! There are few more pressing needs, therefore, than the instruction of women in those important matters which so profoundly affect the health of the household.

While the claims and assertions of the more enthusiastic advocates of massage must be taken with a liberal allowance, it is really true that many unnatural conditions may be corrected by intelligent manipulation, if not more quickly, at least more certainly and permanently, than by medication. Massage was probably the first system devised for the relief of suffering humanity, and was certainly the first to reach anything like reasonable perfection. It is, therefore, entitled to respectful consideration. Our modern systems of massage are based on a Chinese treatise written about three thousand years ago, and translated into French in the last century. Many of the procedures have been modified from time to time, to conform with our better knowledge of anatomy and physiology. Notwithstanding the numerous changes that have been made, and improvements that have been devised, massage is the contribution of China to the healing science.

Its claim to usefulness rests upon the fact that by the application of pressure over a given region the blood is forced out, carrying with it its portion of vitiated material, and is replaced by a fresh supply more quickly than by the natural action of the circulatory system. It is a valuable method of treatment when properly and scientifically employed. When thus applied, it is capable of rendering valuable aid to the practitioner in many cases, and the study of the science as a means of healing will amply repay the time and labor devoted to it.

(Continued from page five.)

with all the emphasis he could command:

"You lie!"

If he expected Kyd Sloane to resent the charge he was mistaken. The face of Sloane went only a trifle paler, and the old aggravating smile came back to his lips and nestled there.

"I say you lie, Mr. Sloane!" repeated Pelham.

"I sent Dummy after them," replied Sloane, ignoring Pelham's words. "They'll be here directly. Dummy will find them."

"Who is Dummy?"

"Oh, I thought you may have met him. He is Miss Massingbird's mute."

Pelham remembered the mulatto boy who had shown him to his room. He was a mute, then; no wonder he had not replied to his questions.

"Cunningham is the coroner, and Hicks high sheriff," continued Sloane. "They won't be long on the road. What was that you said about a girl?"

The young lawyer did not speak. He did not want to compromise one who might be guiltless, and yet he could not forget the sight which met his gaze when he opened the door of the forbidden room. What had become of the girl in white?

"Very well," resumed Sloane. "You don't have to weave your own halter; that's for the law to do."

"And I promise to remain here till the halter is woven for the person who killed Miss Massingbird!" Pelham flashed.

The words had hardly left his mouth till he was regretful. What if the girl had killed the mistress of Brompton Court? What if her white hand had driven the deadly blade to the heart of the silent occupant of the chamber of horrors? His soul revolted at the very thought.

Finding Sloane impassive and the coolest man he had ever seen, Pelham retreated a pace and dropped into a companion chair, from which he looked at the Virginian.

The huge dog cast occasional glances in his direction, but his eyes returned to those of his master as if asking a pertinent question.

Half an hour passed away. The morning light broadened and several squirrels began to frisk among the leaves in front of the arbor. Where was the girl in white, anyhow? She was not the creation of an overstrained imagination. He had found her standing over the dead with the murderous blade in her hands. If she had not killed Miss Massingbird, then, in the name of Heaven, who had?

"They're coming now," suddenly spoke Sloane, and his gaze wandered down the cedar-bordered way that led to the limit of the grounds.

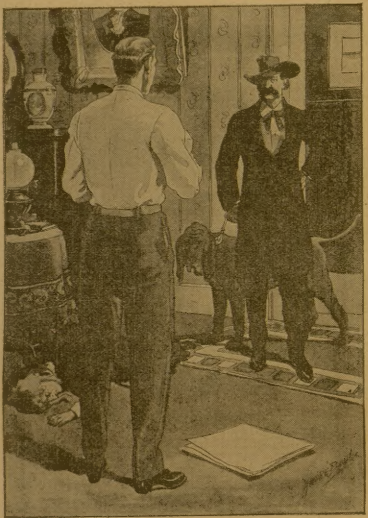
Presently the indistinct figures became more distinct and Gordon beheld four men mounted, approaching the house. The dog raised his head and fixed his eyes on the group.

In another instant the riders were dismounting at the edge of the veranda.

"Hello, Kyd!" cried one of the quartette. "What's happened at the Court?"

"Miss Massingbird's been murdered!" was the reply.

The continuation of this extraordinary story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming year.



On the threshold stood the man with the slouch hat.

◆

When a young man flatters a girl she decides later that he really meant it.

Two of a Kind.

Farmer Haykins is particularly proud of his apple trees, on which he spends a lot of time, with the result that the fruit forms his heart's delight and the envy of his neighbors. Lately, however, schoolboys have shown a particular fondness for these apples, and Farmer Haykins was heard to declare that trouble was in store for the first trespasser caught in his orchard.

One morning a neighbor dropped in on him, and after a few minutes' conversation remarked in an uneasy manner that his son was in a bad way.

"Oh, what's the matter with him?" asked the farmer sympathetically.

"He's become a sleepwalker. It's very sad," was the reply.

"So it is, so it is."

"And the worst part of it is," the other went on, "he's so fond of apples, that I'm afraid one of these nights you'll catch him in your orchard. If you do, for goodness sake don't wake him. It's absolutely dangerous to do so."

Farmer Haykins shook his head thoughtfully.

"Well, you see," he said presently, "I don't quite know what to say. My bulldog, wot I leaves in charge of the trees, he's a sleepwalker, too, and I'm wonderin' wot will happen if the two meets."

But they never met.

◆

Education of Uriu.

Vice Admiral Uriu of the Japanese navy was a member of the class of 1881 at the naval academy at Annapolis and has recently been here visiting his classmates and celebrating a reunion with them.

At a dinner given to the vice admiral when he was in this country one of his classmates told a story on the vice admiral as an illustration of the progress of the Japanese in the past thirty years.

"Uriu was the most correct and proper person in our class," said the story teller. "He was prim and precise and very reverent. I met him one morning on the parade ground.

"'Good morning,' I said, enthusiastically. 'Isn't this a splendid day?'

"'It is, indeed,' Uriu responded gravely, 'and I thank heaven I am here and permitted to enjoy it.'

"When I met Uriu this time, after a lapse of nearly thirty years, I recalled that conversation and said, 'Good morning. Isn't this a splendid day?'

"'It is, indeed,' Uriu replied, 'and will you, for heaven's sake, kindly tell me where I can get a drink?'"

◆

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The Master of the Mills;

Or, Mildred Starbard's Peril

By L. A. Jocelyn Smith

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CHAPTER XVI.

CONNECTED LINKS.

WHEN I was twenty-two, and Emeline fifteen, my mother died, and we were left to earn our support as best we might. To do myself justice, I affirm that I loved Emeline as dearly as if she had been in reality the sister she supposed herself to be.

"We finally secured positions at the counter of a dry goods store, and for three years remained in the employ of Graff & Hollis.

"You came to the city to attend a commencement at Yale, and chance, or fate threw you in our path. It must have been your evil genius that sent you to the establishment, where you made a few purchases, saw Emeline, and fell desperately in love—you, a sedate bachelor, were smitten with the beauty of the girl of eighteen, you contrived to get an introduction, visited at our humble abode, proposed marriage, and were accepted.

"Little you or Emeline suspected that I had fallen madly in love with you, and when she, in her sisterly confidence, blushingly asked my congratulation, a demon destroyed my affection for her, and took possession of my heart, but I succeeded in masking my jealousy, and wished her joy.

"You were married, I was forced to witness the ceremony, while a seething fire burned in my veins. After your honeymoon had passed I came to Haselden, not as a guest, but as a member of your family, and every hour I was tortured by your exhibition of affection for the wife I had learned to hate. I vowed in my heart that I would bring about a separation. My evil genius sent me the means in a most unexpected manner, when, one evening, you told us the story of your life, recounted the events of that night when your parents and infant sister, Lura, went down in the Lexington, and at the close of the harrowing tale, you placed the little ivory box containing the coral bracelet in Emeline's hand.

"Then I knew that you were the boy from whom I had filched the bauble, and a diabolical scheme flashed through my brain, a means of accomplishing my purpose. Feigning a severe headache, I returned the kiss from the lips of the innocent wife I was about to betray, and went to my own chamber to perfect the plot I had conceived.

"It was not until midnight that I unlocked the little box given me by my mother, containing the clothing worn by Emeline on the night when she came to us from her dead mother's embrace, and the coral bracelet which I had stolen.

"She had never seen the ornament, for a feeling of shame had always prompted me to keep it hidden. Now I determined it should serve my purpose.

"The better to accomplish my object, I feigned indisposition during the entire day following, exhibited a nervousness which I really felt, lest my plan should miscarry. To my great relief you were called away on business, and your absence would aid me materially.

"Emeline came to my room, sat by my couch, and bathed my head, that was aching from the mental strain.

"'Something is troubling you, poor, dear Letty,' she said. 'I am sure we are trying to make you happy, darling sister, Clifford and I, but perchance we have been so much occupied with each other that you are lonely, we will try and must not be selfish in our love and happiness.'

"How I began the story I had to tell I cannot remember, I only know how her fair face whitened and the frightened stare of her eyes when I drew the beautiful garments from the cedar box and slipped the coral ornament in her hand.

"'And that—that was upon the child's arm—my arm, when—when——'

"'Upon your arm, darling,' I breathed, almost in a whisper, and with a sob in my voice, 'you have seen its counterpart—oh, Emeline, can you understand?'

"'Only too well—God help me! I am—am—what am I?'

"'You are Lura—Clifford Haselden's sister,' I whispered. 'Can you wonder what made me sick and faint when I comprehended the truth, when I examined the bracelet Clifford Haselden had hoarded all these years. There is but one solution. Your mother, at the last moment, must have placed the bracelet upon your arm as a means of identification.'

"Hardened as I was by my jealousy, I felt pity for the wretched young wife groveling at my feet, and strove to comfort her.

"'God pardon me for the sin of which I was ignorant,' she prayed, 'God help him—my brother! He loves me so dearly—oh, Letty, Letty, it will break my heart, it will drive him to madness!'

"'He must never know it,' I soothed, 'you must go away, and at once, that is the only remedy, he must believe that you have deserted him from any other cause than the real one, you have means, I will go with you this very night, see you safely at the station, and return before dawn. It will be hours before you are missed, and I shall profess to know nothing of your absence.'

"Like one in a nightmare Emeline agreed to my proposal, and during the preparation for her flight she remained in the same dazed condition. I packed the few articles of plain apparel in a small, leathern valise, placed her store of pin-money in a plain purse, attired her in black, and arranged the widow's hat and veil, that had been my mother's, upon her head. We stole from the house by the side entrance, taking our way along the by-path past the old smokehouse, and came out upon the ancient road.

"Fortunately, I had purchased a ticket for New York, intending to make the journey, and there was no occasion for us to enter the station, although no one would be likely to recognize the beautiful mistress of Haselden in the somber-garbed, bowed figure, moving with a languid step, who waited beside the track as the midnight train halted for a moment, or the woman in sober brown, with broad, padded shoulders and a limp, who aided her to mount the steps, placed the valise in her hand, and stole away as the bell pealed the signal and the train moved on.

"I had furnished Emeline with written directions where she might find safe shelter, in a quiet boarding-house in Harlem, until I could safely join her, and with the assurance that she would never return, or allow you to discover her retreat, I hastened back to Haselden, and made my way to my chamber, secure in the knowledge that I should never be suspected.

"You remember with what despair you read the brief note she left upon the dressing-table, of the fruitless months of search that passed. I left Haselden for a time, joined Emeline in New York, and when I learned that she would soon become a mother, I made arrangements to place her in a hospital; then I returned to Haselden and sought to win your love, but all my blandishments failed, and, in despair, and half frenzy, I forgot my dignity, cast aside my pride, avowed my affection and besought you to make me your wife.

"Your scorn was veiled by a courteous manner, tempered by pity, but your reply convinced me that my suit was hopeless, that I had humbled myself for naught, and my love turned to bitter, unrelenting hate.

"I returned to New York, visited at the hospital where Emeline was awaiting the event she so much dreaded, and under pretense of a desire to adopt a child, I made arrangements with Doctor Dunbar, with the intention of taking Emeline's infant. She, acting upon my suggestion, that we should appear as strangers, made no sign.

"From the first she had a premonition that she would not survive the ordeal, and her presentiment proved a reality. In one week after the birth of her son, she died of fever. I claimed the child at Doctor Dunbar's hands, giving my name as Mrs. Jane Royce of Chicago. If Doctor Harris Dunbar is living he will substantiate my story. I had no intention of burdening myself with the care of an infant whom I hated, and at once inserted advertisements in the leading papers.

"In reply two applicants appeared at my obscure lodgings in Boston, one a wealthy lady of that city, the second a childless widow, whose small income allowed her to take upon herself the rearing of a babe who would regard her as his mother. This time I gave my name as Louise Mathewson, and represented that the child was a foundling that had been left upon my porch.

"I chose Jeanette Bruce in lieu of the wealthy lady, because I had no mind that the son of a pair that I hated, should enjoy the wealth, such as would equal your own. Mrs. Bruce had but recently emigrated from Scotland, and had few acquaintances in America. I took the precaution to disguise myself thoroughly, that I might keep an espionage over the widow and her charge. She removed to Lowell, rented a small cottage, and I took up my residence there and opened a millinery store in an adjoining street.

"Mrs. Bruce could never recognize Madame Casavant as Louise Mathewson, the gray-haired, russet-garbed woman who negotiated with her for the adoption of the orphaned babe.

"Years passed, and although I frequently made trips to New York, I never for a single week, lost sight of the widow or the boy who she had named Allan Bruce.

"When Allan was seventeen Mrs. Bruce died, leaving him penniless, as her income was only a life annuity.

"How I gloated over the irony of fate that had left the real heir of a millionaire a pauper. I often employed Allan to run of errands, for which I always paid him liberally, and at the widow's funeral I played the part of consoler, took him to my own house for a time, and finally secured him a position in a large thread manufactory in Connecticut. This step was a portion of my plan for revenge. Step by step he gained a thorough knowledge of the business, and later became the confidential secretary and bookkeeper for the proprietor, while I bided my time for the final act in my revenge, by placing the millionaire's son as a servant in the establishment which was his birthright. My calculations were made to a nicety, and the devil helps his own. Allan's employer died suddenly, of heart failure, Allan might still have remained with the firm, but, through my advice he gave up his situation. The bookkeeper at Haselden was infirm, and I knew that his place must soon be vacant. Accordingly, I advised Allan to apply for the position, which I professed to have discovered through a friend. He followed my advice, his application was accepted, and he became successor to Martin Wood, who retired on the pension you allowed for long and faithful service.

"While Emeline's child was in my charge, I gave him a mark by which I might identify him, should I lose track of him by any means, a star, tattooed upon his cheek, near the nose, in a position that could never be hidden by beard or mustache. It was no blemish, not larger than a buckshot, but so deeply imbedded, and so distinctly outlined that there could be no mistake.

"But I have never lost sight of him, and I swear to you, by all my hopes of Heaven, that the man known as Allan Bruce, your bookkeeper, is your son and heir, born in Blank Hospital, New York City.

"Seven days after his birth, Emeline Haselden, his mother, died and was buried at the expense of the city.

"From the hour that my revenge was complete my health began to fail, a strange malady preyed upon mind and body, a remorse for the evil I had wrought, until, at the eleventh hour, I am goaded to the confession of my sin. I am about to make the journey to Haselden, but I have a presentiment that I shall not reach my journey's end. If I never look upon your face again in this life, the sealed envelope, addressed to you, containing my confession and the stolen bracelet, will be found upon my pulseless heart.

"Forgive my sin, and, if you can, offer a petition to a merciful Saviour for the wretched being whose love for you has wrought such woe.

"LETITIA STACHWELL."

Step by step the man, whose office of detective had been left as a legacy, arranged the evidence, his father's letters, the dying admission of Horace Littlefield, the written confession of Letitia Stachwell, the paper that had stricken Clifford Haselden, and had been taken from his dead hand and concealed in the frame of the picture in the very room which had been closed for so many years.

Doctor Dunbar remembered that the peculiar mark upon Allan's face, although scarcely a blemish, had attracted his attention, and occasioned surprise that such a position for a tattoo should have been chosen. He examined the coral bracelet, again read the name "Lura," engraved in old English text.

"The chain is complete," he murmured, "surely it was the guiding hand of Providence that caused Littlefield to insist that this room should be thrown open for the occupancy of a guest, and that guest one whose mission was to unravel the mystery shrouding the flight of the young wife. Surely the spirits of the dead must hover near. It only remains to seek out the master of Haselden and place his credentials in his hand."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MASTER OF HASELDEN.

For the second time, within the space of a few months, the mill was closed by reason of the death of the master of Haselden; the broad pennant of mourning fluttered in the fresh breeze as Doctor Dunbar passed the great gates on his way to the tenement house where he would assuredly find Allan Bruce.

There was a thinly-veiled rejoicing among the operatives, and a group was standing near the gates, each speculating upon the change of ownership and how it would affect their interests.

"Mrs. Granger is a good woman, a good bit like her cousin, the old master, and I, for one, don't imagine she'll hold our noses to the grindstone, as the last one did," remarked an overseer.

The doctor caught the words, and the reply:

"Nobody knows, she may feel her oats, now she's owner instead of being housekeeper for Horace Littlefield."

"I wonder if Bruce would have prosecuted if that villain had 'a' lived?" queried another.

"Of course he would," asserted the burly overseer. "Milly is his sweetheart, and he's not the man to let such a crime pass. Yes, sir, Littlefield would have paid the penalty, there's not a doubt in my mind."

"Wel-l-l, the cur has gone where all his money won't help him—good riddance to bad rubbish, I say," chimed in a tall, lathy man, "I only wish Bruce was the owner——"

Doctor Dunbar lost the closing of the sentence as he hastened away at a good pace, and a smile dawned beneath his silky mustache.

"How little you dream how soon your dream will be gratified," he thought.

Mrs. Starbard was pouring a cup of tea for her boarder when a sharp tug at the doorbell announced a visitor.

"I'll go, mother," called Milly, "it's the gasman, very likely."

"Is Mr. Bruce in?"

Allan heard the inquiry and recognized the voice.

"Yes, sir, he is at supper, do you wish to speak with him?" returned Milly.

"I have a little matter of business, but no need to disturb him, I will wait his convenience, if I may," replied Doctor Dunbar, and in compliance with the implied request, Milly led the way to the sittingroom.

Wondering much what the doctor could want of him, Allan hastily finished the meal and joined his visitor.

The doctor rose from his chair and extended his hand, grasping Allan's fingers with so hearty a clasp that the young man opened his eyes in astonishment.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Haselden. I improved the first spare time to call and congratulate you on your exceeding good fortune."

Again the doctor wrung the hand of the bewildered young man, who gazed in his face, this time with a blank stare of amazement.

"Happy to meet you, doctor, but you have made a slight mistake—my name is Bruce."

"Allow me to correct you," pursued Dunbar. "Am I mistaken in my information that you were the adopted son of Mrs. Jeanette Bruce?"

"Quite correct, but by the adoption I gained a legal right to the name I bear," explained Allan, who began to suspect that his visitor was a lunatic.

"Let that pass for the present, but, if I understand rightly, you have no knowledge of your parentage; you only know that you were a foundling, that the person from whom Mrs. Bruce received you was a woman who called herself Louise Mathewson. Your adopted mother lost all trace of this person from the moment when the papers were executed—am I correct?"

"Very true, but, in God's name, how did you learn this?"

"From Louise Mathewson's written statement. Sit down—sit down, my budget of information is not exhausted, I have much more to tell you, and again I offer my congratulations."

Allan sank into a chair beside his visitor.

"Do you remember a lady, whose name was Casavant—Madame Casavant?"

"Certainly. She was the only friend I had after my mother died—what of her?"

"What became of her after she aided in securing you your present position at the Haselden mill? If I understand the matter, you have lost all trace of her."

"I have lost all trace—I have written her several times, but received no reply—I fear she may be dead."

"She is dead," agreed the doctor.

(Continued on page ten.)

Fat Defeating Extraordinary.

MARGARET KNOLLY

Margaret Knolly

SLENDER Margaret Knolly, *now*, if you please. The fascinating leading lady of the Bijou, now more fascinating than ever, astonished all her friends on Broadway the other day by presenting to their admiring gaze a svelt and willowy form in place of the plump, not to say *fat*, outlines with which she gaily sailed away to new triumphs and foreign shores last January. After a good deal of diplomatic cross-examination from interested fat acquaintances the secret was cautiously whispered to a few dear friends, with the result that everybody knows it now. It was not exercise, nor fasting, nor sea air, nor worry about her new venture that had brought about this wonderful willowy change in the charming Margaret; no, none of these; nothing but a simple mixture which all good druggists are familiar with and can supply at small cost, to-wit: One-half ounce Marmola, one-half ounce Fluid Extract Cascara Aromatic, and three and one-half ounces Peppermint Water. "Grown folks need a teaspoonful after meals and at bedtime," explained the now slender Margaret. "It is simply wonderful. It takes off the fat quickly, as much as a pound a day, and keeps it off. You can eat what you like, too. In that respect it is unlike anything of the kind I ever heard of, and besides it has another splendid feature—it is entirely harmless, and will not cause wrinkles. I think it is about as essential a toilet article for the woman who is fat and wants to get thinner as face powder. In order to get the best results, however, you should buy the Marmola in the original package and mix it in with the other two ingredients after you get home."

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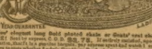

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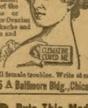
SUFFERING WOMEN

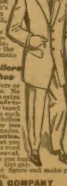


Write me and I will mail you in plain wrapper a FREE TRIAL TREATMENT of CLEMATINE. This remedy is a private prescription of a prominent doctor who has used it with wonderful results. It cures diseases of women, such as Ulceration, Displacement or Falling of the Womb, Scanty, Profuse or Painful Periods, Uterine or Ovarian Growths, Headache, Backache and Bearing Down Sensations and all other female complaints. It succeeds where other remedies fail. It costs nothing to try. I will also mail a book which describes all female troubles. Write at once

Mrs. J. E. VanBuren, 405 A Baltimore Bldg., Chicago

$3.00 Puts This Made-To-Measure Suit on any Man's Back

Made Strictly To Your Measure Just As You Want It From Goods of Your Own Choice.



JUST send us your name and address today for our low price tailored made-to-measure clothes offer, liberal samples of our wool fabrics and new Spring Style Book showing the new styles in men's clothes, just as worn here in Chicago, self-measurement blank, tape line, etc., all FREE.

No such price has ever before been made on men's real made-to-measure, hand-tailored, finely finished, good clothes. These are the reasons: When you have us make your clothes, you

Buy Direct From the Tailors Who Make The Clothes

We have no agents. No dealers or storekeepers take orders for us. No man stands between us to take an extra profit. 10,000 men wear Bell made-to-measure clothes. Our prices are based on making this number of suits each year; that's why we can make clothes to order of the finest goods for less than others charge for ready-mades.

We guarantee fit and satisfaction. We make you two suits for what you now pay for one. Don't take our word for this. We send suits on approval. You can see and try on before you buy. Don't wear ready-made clothes. Get garments made to give you a perfect figure and make you the best dressed man in your town.

BELL TAILORING COMPANY

Dept. A Chicago, Illinois.

BLACK AND RICH

Is the Way Postum Should Be.

A liquid food that will help a person break a bad habit is worth knowing of. The president of one of the state associations of the W. C. T. U., who naturally does not want her name given, writes as follows:

"Whenever I was obliged to go without coffee for breakfast a dull, distracting headache would come on before noon. I discovered that, in reality, the nerves were crying out for their accustomed stimulant.

"At evening dinner I had been taught by experience that I must refrain from coffee or pass a sleepless night. While visiting a physician and his wife I was served with a most excellent beverage at their dainty and elegant table and, upon inquiry, discovered that this charming beverage was Postum and that the family had been greatly benefited by leaving off coffee and using Postum.

"I was so in love with it, and so pleased with the glimpse of freedom from my one bondage of habit and so thoroughly convinced that I ought to break with my captor, that upon my return home I at once began the use of Postum and have continued it ever since.

"I don't know what sick headache is now, and my nerves are steady and I sleep sound, generally eight hours. I used to become bilious frequently and require physic; now seldom ever have that experience.

"I have learned that long boiling is absolutely essential to furnish good Postum. That makes it clear, black and rich as any Mocha and Java blend. Please withhold my name, but you may use the letter for the good it may do."

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

An Unanswerable Argument.

Doctor Oldschool—Well, your humbug homeopathy has killed another man, I see.

Doctor Newschool—Eh? Killed a man?

Doctor Oldschool—Yes, sir. The man tried to give a dose of your miserable little pellets to a member of his family, and he swallowed the cork. Yes, sir. Such a horrible accident couldn't happen in the allopathic treatment. No, sir. We use big bottles, with corks big enough to stay out of people's insides. Yes, sir.

A Chance to Make Money.

Yes, elegant free homesteads can still be had in Mexico where many Americans are now locating. You need not go to Mexico, but are required to have five acres of fruit trees planted within five years. For information address the Jantha Plantation Co., Block 593, Pittsburg, Pa. They will plant and care for your trees on shares, so you should make a thousand dollars a year. It is never hot, never cold. The health conditions are perfect.

Simple Arithmetic.

Shoe Dealer—Shoes should not be worn right along, ma'am. They should be given a chance to get back their shape. Buy two pairs, ma'am, and wear one pair one day and the other the next.

Fair Customer—Will shoes last longer that way?

Dealer (with confidence)—Yes, indeed, ma'am; twice as long.

FRECKLES.

It is Easy to Remove Them.

For years I tried every known remedy without success. Skin specialists and doctors said I would take them to the grave. I fooled them all.

I cured myself by a simple discovery. I will send you the prescription free if you will write for it. It took off my freckles and the freckles of thousands of others. It will remove yours. It will clear the worst complexion. Write today. Address Mrs. E. C. White, Box 44, Dept. 1B, Buffalo, N. Y.

No Details Needed.

Mrs. Blank—The paper tells of a postmaster who was appointed by John Quincy Adams, and has held the position ever since. Was he an unusually good man, do you think?

Mr. Blank (an experienced citizen)—Oh, not at all. It was an unusually poor office.

WOMEN SHOULD KNOW THIS.

Have you tried various remedies for diseases peculiar to our sex? Suppositories and cones are mostly cocoa butter, olive oil or other fats. They can't cure you. Medical Science has discovered that these fats and oils prevent the action of the medicine. You should know why. I want to explain it to you. And I want you to try a remedy which will cure—which contains no oils or fats—just pure medicine that acts quickly and surely. I will send a liberal trial, and the explanatory booklet absolutely free. Address Ella Howard, Box 495, South Bend, Ind.

Better Than Law.

Housekeeper (excitedly)—I am in a terrible way about a servant girl I can't get rid of. I have discharged her, but she won't go. She is a perfect giantess and has a most horrible temper. What would you advise me to do?

Great Lawyer (calmly)—Keep the kerosene can full and the wood wet.

FREE ASTHMA CURE.

D. J. Lane, a chemist, at 115 Lane Bldg., St. Marys Kansas, manufactures a remedy for Asthma in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to anyone who will write for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

A Desperate Subterfuge.

"Henrietta," said Mr. Meekton, "can I eat anything I find growing on a tree and still be a consistent vegetarian?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, joy! I notice that a lot of our chickens have taken to roosting in the woods."

Good Advice.

"And now, my son," said the old rabbit, "here's a bit of advice. Always keep on the good side of a dog."

"But, pop," queried the youngster, who was about to go forth into the big world, "which is the good side of a dog?"

"The outside, son," answered the o. r., as he bit off another hunk of cabbage.

The Golf Elbow.

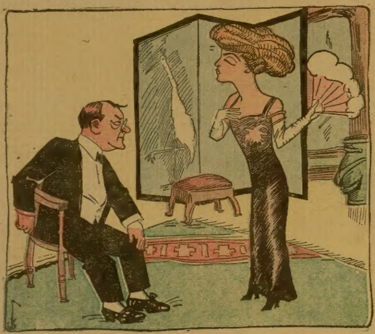
Mistah Ebony—How is youah good health dis mo'nin', Mistah Black?

Mistah Black—I'se all hunkydory, 'cept my right a'm, Mistah Ebony. I's sufferin' from de golf elbow.

"Wot you been doin'?"

"Beatin' ca'pet."

FULLY PICKED.



Mrs. Snip—I would have you know, sir, that I pick my company.
Mr. Snip—Yes; to pieces.

She Could Spare One.

"'Scuse me, ma'am," said the hobo to the lady at the front door, "can yous spare a pore beggar a copper?"

"Certainly," answered the lady and, turning to a speaking tube, she called: "Jane, send that policeman you have in the kitchen up here at once."

But the hobo was beating it up the nearest alley.

BIG COMPANY DISTRIBUTES BIG MEDICAL BOOK FREE.

The well known Pierce Co. of Buffalo, is advertising its business by giving away free of charge copies of the "People's Common Sense Medical Adviser." This famous book has 1,008 pages with engravings and color plates and the copies of the new revised edition that are given away are bound in cloth. This book treats of Anatomy, Hygiene, Medicine, Mother and Babe and every family ought to grasp this opportunity to get a copy free by writing to Dr. R. V. Pierce at the address given in the advertisement on page 14 of this paper.

A Gentle Hint.

Rev. Gentleman—Do you know, my friend, that half the cases of cancer are caused by people smoking those foul dirty, short, black clay pipes?

Son of Toil—And do you know, guv'nor, that half the black eyes are caused by folks not mindin' their own business?

Slightly Revised.

Penner—Yes, my new novel is called "Annie o' the Aeroplane."

Friend—Same old chestnut, I suppose. The hero loves the ground she walks on?

Penner—No; in this case he loves the air she flies in.

Her Favorite Candidate.

During the last Presidential campaign the suffragettes of a small town in Pennsylvania met for the purpose of getting a rich woman to join their ranks. She was married to a poor man. They took her into a small room or private office and began questioning her, she in return answering correctly.

"Now," said the president, "this is the most important question: 'Whom would you support in this campaign if you were able to vote?'"

The woman answered:

"The one I've always supported—my husband."

An Honest Man.

Kavitt—I notice that Dr. Gripper, the dentist, has two signs, one that contains the simple word, "Dentist," and the other composed of two words, viz., "Painless Dentist."

Filles—Yes, and if you'll notice a little more carefully you'll learn that he uses the latter sign only when he isn't working.

A Bright One.

Mr. Jinks—Every time the baby looks into my face he smiles.

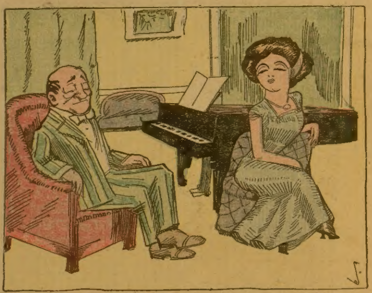
Mrs. Jinks—Well, it may not be exactly polite, but it shows he has a sense of humor.

Beginning of the End.

Little Willie—Say, pa, why is the last of a college term called the commencement?

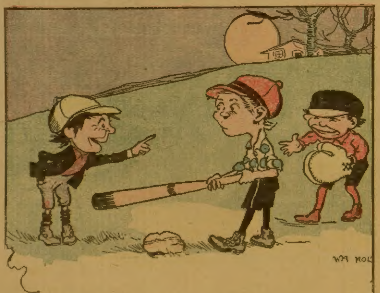
Pa—Because, my son, it is the commencement of the graduate's realization that the world wasn't made for him exclusively.

LOGICAL.



Mrs. Miffkins—John, do you think it's true that aggressive, impulsive people usually have black eyes?
Miffkins—Certainly! If they haven't got them at first they get them later.

HEAD WORK.



The Manager (to weak batter)—Aw, why don't you use yer head?
The Player—Er—I—am—usin'——
The Manager—Aw, I mean stick it out an' let the ball hit it. Youse gotter git to foist SOME way!

The Baron's Custom.

Inquiring Lady—Do you always drink beer when you are thirsty?

Baron Snickensuts—No, ma'am; I alvay drinks vater ven I am thirsdy, shust the same as you do.

"Then when do you drink beer?"

"The rest off the dime."

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Front-Row Candidate.

Giles—I used to part my hair in the middle, but never again.

Miles—Why not?

Giles—Because my hair has gone to parts unknown.

Not the Usual Kind.

Giles—I had a close shave this morning, old man.

Miles—So? How did it happen?

Giles—I don't know—unless the barber made a mistake and used a sharp razor.

Passed Them Up.

Young Widow—Have you read any of the late novels?

The Bachelor—No; since the first of the year I have been trying to lead a better life.

Good on a Stretch.

Stubb—I see they are about to introduce aluminum coins in Fsance.

Penn—Wouldn't be a bad idea to have rubber money in this country.

Stubb—Rubber?

Penn—Yes, then we would have "elastic currency."

ARE YOU AN HEIR?

It is estimated that there are something like 30,000 persons scattered throughout the U. S. and Canada, who are entitled to monies and lands now tied up in the English High Court of Chancery and elsewhere owing to the inability of lawyers to locate them. The great trouble is that foreign lawyers, when searching for lost heirs, almost invariably advertise for them in London and Edinburgh newspapers; as these papers are seldom seen in this country, of course, the missing heir never knows of the good fortune that is awaiting him or her, and thus the case drags along in the courts for an indefinite time. As an aid to those interested in Chancery cases, and who believe that they are entitled to an inheritance, an enterprising publisher has prepared an authentic list of persons who have been advertised for during the past 150 years, including the famous Bogardus, Sir Francis Drake, Page, Springer, Townley, Jennings and Harlem estates, and unsettled estates in England, Germany, France, Ireland, Scotland and other countries. The list is a very long one, and not only gives the full name of the heir that is being searched for, but also the name and address of the Attorney having charge of the estate in Chancery. Any person can secure details of this list by sending a 2-cent stamp to the Royal Register, 37 Madison Square, New York City.

Eyes, Male and Female.

Miss Nochick—So you have been married a year. Has your husband found out about your dyed hair, false teeth or glass eye yet?

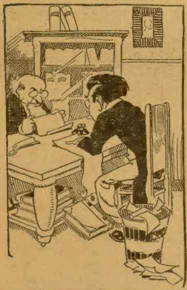
Mrs. Wedlate—No, indeed; he's been too busy concealing the same defects in himself.

Wanted the Pleasure.

Ida—I think Daisy is real mean! She woudn't tell me of her engagement till I had promised to keep it a secret.

Clara—Oh, that's just like Daisy; she always does want to reserve for herself the pleasure of spreading news.

At the Consultation.



The Chief Counsel—The first thing to do is to get at the root of this trouble.

The Associate Counsel—The root of the trouble is the late Mr. Bigwad's fortune.

The Chief Counsel—Well, you heard what I said.

Prescribed by Doctors.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, an honest, tried and true remedy for feminine ills, holds the record for the largest number of actual cures of any similar remedy, and is prescribed and recommended by hundreds of fair-minded doctors who do not fear to recommend a worthy medicine even though it is advertised.

Real Charitable.

Tattered Theodore—'Scuse me mem, but I ain't got scarcely a rag t' me back. Kin yous help me out?

Kind Lady—Certainly. You'll find the rag bag behind the door in the woodhouse. Help yourself.

Don't Fall to Pieces.

De Smart—Why do you persist in buying your clothes at installment houses?

De Sharpe—They always try to give me stuff that will last until the installments are paid.

An End of Servitude.

Mrs. Bloomer—Did you ever! Miss De Talent, the wonderful actress, has married her manager.

Mr. Bloomer—I presume she got tired of being managed.

Not the Same.

Elvira—And he said my beauty was intoxicating, did he?

Pauline—Well, he didn't put it just that way.

Elvira—Then what did he say?

Pauline—He said your face was enough to drive a man to drink.

Conjugal Agreement.

Mr. Winkle—There, I've forgotten to post your letters again. I am very absent-minded.

Mrs. Winkle—Yes, your mind has been absent a good many years.

Advantages of Wealth.

Mr. Nicefellow—I am told that Miss Bullion never wears the same dress twice.

Miss De Pink (rival belle)—Yes, that is true, and I understand she has a different set of teeth for every day in the week.

Not a Title Hunter.

Gossiper—Everybody is saying you married Count de Golde for his title.

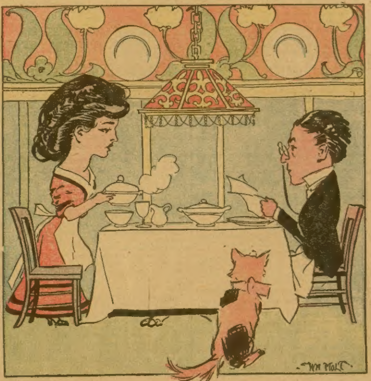
American Girl—That's a base slander. I never thought of his title. I married him for his money.

A Forbidding Spectacle.

Deacon Skinnem—My dear friend, I grieve to find you so worldly minded. Why don't you come to church with me?

Mr. Paywell—Because it worries me to see a half-starved minister.

ALMOST INCREDIBLE.



Wifey—I was so surprised when I went to market this morning.
Hubby—What happened, darling?
Wifey—The price of meat hadn't been raised since I was there yesterday.

Born for One.

Jinks—Have you selected a trade or profession for your boy?

Winks—I shall make a plumber of him.

"Has he a bent that way?"

"He's born for it. Tell him to do a thing immediately, and he won't think of it again for a week."

Her Family.

"Have you been married, Bridget?"

"Twicet, mum."

"And have you any children?"

"Yis, mum—I've three. One be th' third wife av me second husband, an' two be the sicond wife av me first."

The European View.

European Judge—You have been proved guilty of kiling three men, five women, and six children, and the safety of society demands that you shall be got rid of, like any other danger.

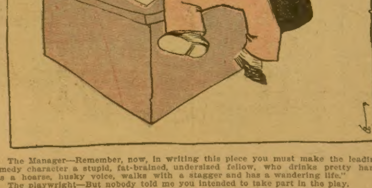
Criminal—All right, Judge, I'll go to America.

As It May Be.

"People are not alike," remarked the moralizer. "What suits one may not please another."

"Right you are," rejoined the demoralizer. "What is one man's automobile may be another man's juggernaut."

GETTING EVEN.



The Manager—Remember, now, in writing this piece you must make the leading comedy character a stupid, fat-brained, undersized fellow, who drinks pretty hard, has a hoarse, husky voice, walks with a stagger and has a wandering life."

The playwright—But nobody told me you intended to take part in the play.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS MAKE 500% PROFIT
Newest patented household article. Nothing like it. Not sold in stores. Absolutely new. Sells on sight—10c. One to dozen needed, every home. Gross weighs but [illegible]—day's supply carried in side pocket. Write quick—send 2c stamp for sample—terms liberal—BIG MONEY for those who don't wait. JOHN B. NOEL CO., 19 Reed Bldg., Grand Rapids, Mich.

AGENTS wanted to sell Native Herbs, $1 box; 250 tablets for 50c. Write P. Melrose, Columbus, O.

AGENTS Big Money selling Rath's Wonder Tea in your locality. Terms free. W.B Rath Co., Portsmouth, Ohio

AGENT'S Art P. Cards $1-1000, 65 sample views 10c. STEWART, B. 619, Providence R. I.

AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. HERRENE AGENCY Co., Box 282, Sta'n L, New York

AGENTS Guaranteed Hosiery is lightning seller. Nothing like it for making money. Free sample. FORSHEE CO., B1009, Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS $20 A WEEK EXPENSES PAID. No experience or capital required, 30 days credit; photo pillow tops 25c; enlarged portraits, bromides, paintings, frames; lowest prices; samples and catalogue free. Dept.Z. Ritter Art Studio, Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS PORTRAITS 35c, Frames 15c. Sheet pictures 1 cent, Stereoscopes 25c. Views 1c. 30 Days' Credit. Samples and Catalog Free. CONSOLIDATED PORTRAIT, Dept. 4153, 1027 W. Adams St., CHICAGO

TOBACCO FACTORY WANTS SALESMEN.
Good Pay, Steady Work and Promotion. Experience unnecessary, as we will give complete instructions. Morotock Tobacco Works, Box L11, Danville, Va.

AGENTS WANTED No cash required. Earn $25-$50 weekly, selling Swiss Embroidered Waist and Dress Patterns, Scarfs, Shawls and Ladies' Novelties, etc. Write for Catalog 1. Leopold Mandel Co., 721 Broadway, New York

AGENTS Easy money demonstrating Triumph. Will instantly remove paint, grease, oil or any other spot from any cloth or fabric without injury or stain. Get busy—coin money. Each demonstration means one to three sales. Particulars FREE. Write quick. A.B.C. Supply Co., Dept. A, Box 326, Sheboygan, Wis.

AGENTS SEND 10c. NOW For handsome sample German silver Key Check with your name and address stamped thereon. Big commissions for taking orders. We also supply blank Checks and stamping outfits. HART MFG. CO Dept. P 88 Guernsey St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

AGENTS WANTED
Sell our Big $1.00 Bottle Sarsaparilla for 30 cents.
200 Per Cent Profit
Best Seller. Finest Medicine. Complies with pure drug law. Everyone buys. Write now for terms.
F. R. GREENE, 22 Lake St., Chicago

Make $50 a Week
100% PROFIT taking orders for famous CUTLER COMPLETE SHAVING OUTFIT. No experience necessary; sells itself. Every man wants one when he sees it; biggest bargain ever offered to shavers. Be your own boss. Exclusive territory and FREE OUTFIT to active agents. Write at once. CARROLL CUTLER & CO., 549 Manhattan Bldg., CHICAGO

2 RINGS GIVEN
Sell 10 packs Prof. Smith's Hair Tonic and Dandruff Remedy at 10c each. WE TRUST YOU. When sold return the $1 and we'll send 2 beautiful rings or choice from premium list. Reliable firm, estab. 15 years. ROSEBUD PERFUME CO., Box 89, Woodsboro, Md.

AGENTS Our Vegetable Soap is the fastest seller on earth. Big money — permanent business; exclusive territory; sample free. Address MORGAN SUPPLY CO., ST. LOUIS, MO.

GREAT MONEY MAKER FOR AGENTS
PROF LONG'S MAGNETIC COMB
Sell Magnetic Combs and get rich; agents wild with success.—They remove dandruff; stop falling hair; RELIEVE HEADACHE, never break. Send 2c stamp for sample. PROF. LONG, 757 Ash St., PEKIN, ILL.

MLY S. SKIRT HANGER
Does away with pressing. Saves room in clothes press. Once adjusted the skirt is ready for packing. 10c. each or 3 for 25c. postpaid. Terms to agents.
MLY S. COMPANY,
Dept. 5, Syracuse, N. Y.

FREE TO AGENTS
Sample of our prepared Gold and Silver letters for Windows, Store Fronts, House Numbers, etc. A Gold Mine for Agents. Calif. agent made $31.95 2 days; Ohio agent $42.00 3 days; Kas. agent $15.25 1 day. You can do as well. Easy, pleasant work. This is your chance to make big money. Write today for full particulars and free sample to agents. Metallic Sign Company, 418 N. Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Make Money Selling to Women
Housewives need it, want it, will buy when told of its merits
The Fresco Flat-Iron
(Self-Heating Absolutely Safe) (Burns Alcohol or Gasoline)
Write for most liberal terms. One Agent sold over 1300 last year. Booklet free
New York Flat-Iron Co. Box 50 Belle Mead New Jersey

BIG MAIL FREE!

POST OFFICE

Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter, papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these Directory Lists to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. We have been publishing the Agent's Directory List for several years and refer to the editor of this paper who will tell you we are reliable. All we ask is that you send 10 cents in silver and we will enter your name in our Agents' Directory List as above stated. Write today. Address
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$2.50 a Month BUYS a GENUINE Kimball ORGAN

At Factory Prices.

Free Music Instructions by Our Diagram System & Piano Stool, if you write us at once.

You can now buy the famous Kimball Organs direct from the makers at factory prices. We will send them to reliable people anywhere, to be paid for on our extremely easy payment plan—$2.50 monthly and upwards, if desired.

Operating the largest organ factory in the world, employing the largest capital, buying raw material in the greatest quantity for cash—the Kimball system of manufacturing and distributing positively saves you $20 to $50 on strictly first-class organs.

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SEND TODAY FOR MONEY-SAVING PLAN AND 30 DAYS' FREE TRIAL OFFER.

Under no circumstances can you afford to buy or consider any other organ until you have our money-saving proposition.

Our half a century's manufacturing experience, our financially strong guarantee means much to you.

The most inexperienced buyer, a thousand or more miles away, can deal with us as wisely as the shrewdest trader, or as though you were here in person, for your organ will be selected by an expert. A fine stool and music book free with each organ.

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MAGIC NEEDLES RODS, Goldometers, Chronometers etc., for treasure seekers. Millions of wealth under your feet. Guaranteed the best made. Interesting booklet for 2 ct. stamp. FREE
P. & M. AGENCY, 10 ELM ST., PALMYRA, PA.

PILES CURE---ETTO guaranteed Sure Cure. Quick relief. We mean this and furnish proof and best references. Our cure mailed sufferers Free on trial. If benefited pay $1.00; otherwise pay nothing. Home Treatment Association, Dept. 35 Indianapolis, Ind.

MORPHINE FREE TRIAL TREATMENT
Opium and all drug habits. Hundreds of testimonials prove that our painless home remedy restores the nervous and physical system and removes the cause. A full trial treatment alone often cures. Write us in confidence. ST. PAUL ASSOCIATION, Suite 1201—48 Van Buren St. Chicago

Stomach Troubles Vanish Like Magic

FREE to Every Man or Woman

DR. YOUNG'S PEPTOPAD

Would you like to eat all you want to, and what you want to, when you want to, without a chance for trouble in your stomach?

Would you like to say farewell for the rest of your life to Dyspepsia, Indigestion, Sour Stomach, Distress after eating, Nervousness, Catarrh of the Stomach, Heart Fluttering, Sick Headache and Constipation?

Then send me 10 cents to cover cost of packing and I will mail you absolutely free one of these wonderful Stomach Drafts. They regulate the bowels, relieve soreness, strengthen every nerve and muscle of your stomach, relieve you at once and make you feel like a new man or woman. So write today enclosing 10 cents for the postage, etc., and get one of these wonderful Stomach Drafts that are celebrated because they cure where medicines fail. Write Dr. G. C. Young, 50 National Bank Bldg., Jackson, Mich.

The Master of the Mills.

(Continued from page seven.)

"How do you know that?"

"She lost her life in the railroad accident; she is buried in Mound Cemetery."

"Impossible! You must be mistaken—her name would have appeared in the list, which I read carefully."

"She was not recognized, save by one, and he made no sign; no one came to claim the body, and she was buried by the authorities."

"Who recognized her?"

"That you will learn later—do you know where you were born?"

"You have a very uncomfortable habit of answering a question by asking another. If you have any knowledge of my parentage or antecedents, be so kind as to tell me the truth. If I am—am——"

Allan was growing impatient, and his irritation was apparent.

"Be satisfied on that score, my young friend; you were born in lawful wedlock, of good parentage; your birthplace was Blank Hospital, New York City."

"Thank God there is no shame—my parents must have been poor, else I should not have been born in a hospital, but, in heaven's name, tell me how you know this—are you certain?"

"Positive; my father was the attending physician, I have the written proofs, in his own hand. Your mother died when you were scarcely a week old, you were adopted by a Mrs. Jane Royce of Chicago, a lady of means, who promised to rear you as her own."

"And, weary of her charge left me upon a doorstep," interrupted Allan, bitterly, "but who were my parents? I must know!"

"Your mother was known as 'No. 16,' she was entered on the records as 'Mrs. Mary Smith,' which was, of course, an assumed name."

The angry blood mounted to Allan's temples, and he replied, hotly:

"What does that signify? You assured me that I am of good parentage, and yet I was born in a hospital, my mother was a charity patient, I was adopted by a lady who deserted me, and I was handed over, like a stray kitten, to the woman who proved a loving mother. Who am I?"

"Prepare for a startling revelation. You are the son of Clifford Haselden, the late owner of Haselden mill. Your mother was his wife, Emeline Haselden."

"Are you mad? Clifford Haselden had no child; his wife deserted him, or disappeared a short time after her marriage, all trace of her was lost. I have heard the story——"

"Precisely," interrupted the doctor; "read the contents of these papers and it will solve the riddle; you will find that I speak truthfully."

Allan grasped the package with fingers that trembled, and unfolded the first, reading it mechanically and carefully, while Dunbar watched the play of his features.

Half an hour passed, and not a word was spoken until the last paper was folded and returned to the envelope.

The doctor broke the silence.

"Are you convinced?"

"I can see no flaws in the chain of evidence, and yet it seems like a dream from which I must awake to find myself still Allan Bruce, instead of Allan—or, perhaps, you have to rechristen me, my mother may have given me a name," suggested Allan.

"No, you forget that she believed you had no right to an existence; she wished you to remain ignorant of what she deemed facts; your adopted mother gave you a name at the baptismal font. You are undoubtedly Allan Haselden, born in lawful wedlock, and as such, the Master of Haselden, and heir of your late father's estates."

"And to you I owe the thanks, the gratitude that words are too feeble to express."

There was a half sob in Allan's voice when he grasped Dunbar's hand in a strong clasp.

"The thanks are quite undeserved, my young friend. My father felt assured that the young mother and her infant were victims of some cruel wrong, and the belief was strengthened by the broken sentences of the patient when, in her delirium, she called so piteously upon her husband—her brother—and upon the sister who had so foully deceived her, in whom she trusted until the last, and begged that her innocent babe might be cared for, and never know the truth. He imagined that Mrs. Royce would rear the infant as her own, to fill an honorable station in life, as she solemnly promised. When he discovered that he had been imposed upon, it was too late to rectify his mistake; he had lost all trace of the woman or the child, but he did not cease in his efforts to unravel the mystery, and to me he left the obligation as a sacred trust. I became a detective by force of circumstances, and Providence aided me in the accomplishment of the work. My acquaintance with Littlefield was the stepping-stone, although I had no idea of the connection. His visit at the particular time when the papers came into my possession, our visit to the clairvoyant, the effect her revelations had upon Littlefield were but links in the chain of events——"

"The clairvoyant? I do not understand."

Dunbar gave an outline.

"Ah! It was Milly's fate that the medium revealed! No wonder the guilty wretch quailed," breathed Allan.

"Your marked resemblance to the portrait of Clifford Haselden was the first clew, and I was on the point of interviewing you concerning your lineage when Milly returned and revealed the real character of Horace Littlefield, whose odd freak had given me his uncle's room.

"On his deathbed, Horace, goaded by his conscience, imagined that the phantom of the uncle he had wronged, hovered beside his bed, and he revealed the hiding place of the confession which you have read. I have fulfilled the mission left me as a legacy, and I leave the role of detective to abler brains than mine."

"You have proved yourself a very sleuth in unearthing this crime, and the mystery of my mother's desertion, and have established my claim, but, more than all, I prize the name which is mine by birthright."

"And now, as you must be anxious to impart the good news to your sweetheart, I will bid you good night," smiled Dunbar.

The proofs were positive, and no litigation was necessary. One week after Allan's heirship was established, he led pretty Milly to the altar.

Great was the rejoicing of the employes, consequent upon the change of dynasty, and the sentiment was freely expressed.

"Mr. Allan is a chip of the old block; no more grinding and cutting of wages, he's willing to live and let live, he is," declared the stout overseer, an opinion that none disputed.

Mrs. Granger received an annuity that enabled her to live in comfort during the remainder of her days, but she chose to remain as housekeeper.

"I have neither chick nor child to inherit, so what use would all this money be to me; all I wish is that I may be permitted to remain in the home that has been mine for so many years, where Cousin Clifford lived and died," she told Allan, and in compliance with her request, Allan secured to her a life interest in the pleasant suite of rooms she had occupied since her residence at Haselden, where she might remain when age and infirmities compelled her to retire from active duties.

Mrs. Starbard had her own pleasant apartments where she found rest after her days of toil, and at the mill across the river, there was no more murmuring, or fear of a strike. Each Saturday, at the noon hour, the operatives received their liberal wages, and filed through the great gates for their afternoon holiday, while smiles greeted the owner in lieu of the frowns that disfigured the faces whenever they chanced to meet the unscrupulous man who, for a brief period, had made himself Master of Haselden.

The end.

THE HUSBAND'S CONQUEST

"Of course I have not married him because I was in love with him," said Grace Harland, with a light laugh.

She was sitting in a golden-and-dun colored boudoir, hung with silken draperies, and carpeted with pale-gray carpet, bordered with scarlet. The windows were full of flowering plants; an exquisite statue of Hebe occupied a marble pedestal in the middle of the room, and the panels of the walls were filled in with mirrors, which reflected the young bride's every motion a score of times.

Mrs. Harland was dressed in a beautiful wrapper of rose-colored silk, which fell around her in pink clouds; pale Neapolitan corals, carved so delicately that a magnifying glass would not have put them to the blush, hung from her delicate ears, and clasped the folds of tulle at her throat; diamonds glittered on her fingers, and the tiny handkerchief peeping from her pocket was edged with exquisite lace.

Grace's face, all lilies and roses, with the glory of golden hair floating away from it, was a jewel worth all this expensive setting.

Fanny Warner, her old schoolmate, sat opposite her, secretly envious of all this splendor, and wondering that Grace Hayden, who had taught in the same district school as herself, was not more elated by her sudden promotion.

"Well, then," said she, "why did you marry him?"

"Because I was poor, and he was rich; because I was tired of teaching, and he offered me all this."

And Grace glanced around upon the luxuries that surrounded her.

"Nobody could be foolish enough to suppose it was a love match," she said. "He's much older than I am, and not at all my ideal; but I couldn't drudge on forever at my profession, and I think I've made a lucky exchange."

"Grace, you are a heartless coquette," exclaimed Fanny Warner.

"No, I am not," said Grace, with a shake of the lovely golden curls. "You would do just the same thing yourself, Fanny Warner, if you had a chance—you know you would."

And as Grace laughed out a sweet, defiant chime, she did not know that her silly words had another auditor than Fanny Warner—that the door leading into the rich banker's study was ajar, and that he had heard every syllable she spoke.

It was quite true that Robert Harland was not a young man. He had passed the Rubicon of middle age before he had allowed himself to fall in love and marry; and the flame burned all the deeper and more tender because the wood was mellowed by age.

He had looked on Grace Hayden as little less than an angel, and now——

"I should have known this before," he said to himself, with ashen-pale face and trembling limbs. "I should have divined that spring and autumn were unsuited. So—she has married me for my money."

"Grace," he said that evening, "I have tickets for the opera tonight. Would you like to go?"

"No, I don't think I care about it," said Grace listlessly.

"Then we will remain at home, and I will read to you that new poem," suggested the husband.

"I am tired of poetry," pettishly retorted Grace. "I do wish you would leave me to enjoy myself my own way once in a while."

"Do I bore you, Grace?" Robert Harland asked, with an inexplicable quiver in his voice.

"Awfully! I'm just in the midst of this delightful story, and I can't bear to be interrupted."

"Very well. The offense shall not be repeated," said Mr. Harland quietly.

After that a subtle and sudden change came over his whole life.

He was as courteous and attentive to his young wife as ever, but Grace felt that all the heart and soul were gone out of the little courtesies, the scrupulously rendered attentions.

For a while she rather liked it.

It was a relief to feel that his eyes were not always on her, his thoughts following her.

She could go where she pleased now, and he asked no questions.

She could employ her time to suit herself, and he had neither criticism nor comment to offer. But gradually she began to realize that she had lost something which was not easily to be replaced. Grace Harland had regarded her husband's love as one of the fixed facts of her existence.

A cold chill crept over her heart when she fully perceived that it was in some way slipping away from her.

"Robert," she said one evening, sitting opposite to her husband, "have I offended you?"

He glanced carelessly up from his book.

"Offended me, Grace? Why, what a ridiculous idea. Of course you haven't offended me."

"I—I thought your manner was somewhat different of late," faltered the young wife, bending her head closer over her embroidery.

"One can't keep on the honeymoon gloss forever," said the banker indifferently.

Life is full of inconsistencies, and love is the strangest complexity in life. For, as Grace Harland grew strengthened in the idea that her hustband was ceasing to adore her after the old idolatrous fashion, she began to fall in love with the one she had married for money. Robert Harland was not young, but he was in the prime of middle age. He was not boyishly handsome, like the wax heads Grace had seen in the barber-shop windows, but he had the appearance and mien of a prince. All women are prone to hero-worship, and our little Grace was no exception to the ordinary rule.

For the first time in her life she was falling in love—and with her own husband!

A few weeks only had elapsed when a crisis in the banking business rendered it imperatively necessary that Mr. Harland should go to Vienna for two or three months.

Poor Grace looked aghast as her husband mentioned his intention to her in the same cool, matter-of-fact way in which he might have criticised the weather.

"Going to Vienna?" she gasped. "Oh, Robert!"

"My dear child, it is a mere bagatelle of a journey. One doesn't mind travel nowadays. I shall not be later than November in returning."

"But—I may go with you?"

"You, my dear! Don't think of it. My travel will necessarily be too rapid, and my time too much occupied with business to think of encumbering myself with a lady companion."

Grace said nothing more, but there was a blur before her eyes, a sickening sensation of despair in her heart.

He cared no more for the society which had been dear to him once.

Oh, what had she done to forfeit the love that had once been poured out so fondly on her life!

It was a rainy July twilight when the banker, wrapped in a heavy overcoat, and with his traveling cap pulled down over his eyes, paced up and down the deck of the steamer Galatea, heedless of all the tumult of departure on an ocean voyage.

Through the misty dusk he tried vainly to catch the ghostly outlines of the city spires—the city that held his young wife.

"She will be happy enough without me," he said to himself bitterly. "She has her mother and sister with her. She bade me adieu without a tear, and it may be that my continued absence will teach her to think less coldly of me. Dear little Grace, sweet spring blossom, my prayers may reach you if my love cannot."

And Robert Harland went below. To his infinite surprise the stateroom he had engaged for his own use was not empty. A lady sat there, with veiled face and drooping head. Robert Harland paused in surprise—the figure rose up, and, throwing aside its veil, revealed the blue, starry eyes and pale cheeks of Grace herself.

"Oh, Robert, pardon me!" she sobbed, throwing herself into his arms, "but I could not let you go alone. I love you, Robert; I cannot live without you. When I thought of your being alone, perhaps ill, in a strange land, I thought I should lose my senses. Dear husband, tell me that you are not angry with me." And she burst into a flood of tears.

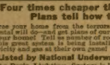
"My own Grace—my wife—my love! Close, close to my heart forevermore!"

And that was all he said.

Grace Harland had married for money; but Grace Harland had learned the secret of love!

◆

A woman's faith in her intuition may be due to her ability to remember the numerous times it went wrong.



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MRS. M. SUMMERS, Box 457, South Bend, Ind., U. S. A.

Old Satan's Gal.

(Continued from page three.)

"I am satisfied, miss, that he killed Old Satan."

She flushed at his words. His blunt allusion to her parent seemed little removed from insulting.

"He was my father," she began. "I——"

"I beg a million pardons, Miss Satan," he hastily cried. "I did not mean to hurt your feelings. Men there are who did not like Ol—your father. He made enemies, and many believed him hand and glove with that monster of the woods—Captain Balder."

"How could that be and he fall by the murderous hand of the lumber boss?" Her dark eyes sought his face in quiet questioning. He bit his lips and shrank back, troubled and somewhat confused.

"I don't pretend to know, miss," stammered the spy.

"But you say he—Balder—slew my father?"

Her calm discussion of the tragedy totally disarmed him. He had expected to find her in tears, broken up because of the tragic death of her parent. Was she utterly heartless? Very few along the Muskalong but knew of the fair and fearless Ellen Forbes. Ockrood, while engaged in his work among the pines, had caught flitting glimpses of the fearless girl, and he had felt a warming of his heart at the very mention of her name. However familiar she may have been to him, his face was a new one to her. She had guessed his name, however, since her parent had spoken of Ockrood as "the Government spy." There was apparently no great love tie between father and daughter

Wondering why this was so, the young woods ranger felt charmed by her artless manners, and resolved to know more of her in the immediate future.

"I say at least that Balder is none too good to do that deed," ventured the young man, after a brief hesitancy.

"None too good, I grant you, yet the two were friends."

"You admit that, do you, Miss Satan?"

"Yes, I admit that, but don't dare call me Miss Satan. My name is Forbes, a name untarnished so far as I know, not even the hint of spying into other people's affairs ever having been attached to it."

Her thrust went home. He laughed, however, as if amused.

"I left you and Captain Balder in the shingle shanty, fighting like angry Bengal tigers. What happened after? Daddy Forbes went over this morning; some one lay hidden there and slew him. It was a foul crime. I shall make it my work to unearth the assassin."

"You, miss?"

"That's what I said." Her eyes flashed, her bosom heaving. He saw beneath the surface a fiery, dauntless spirit. Such a girl! He could not help admiring her, although her seeming want of feeling did not exactly set well with the spy of the pines.

"Yes," he returned, as if in a dream. "No doubt you will prove an effective sleuth. You will hunt for proof of that man's guilt?"

"No."

"No?" He lifted his brows.

"I shall not forget that two men were equally in position to do this deed. Balder I suspect, yet no more strongly than one other."

"Your father had an enemy, perhaps?" he suggested.

"Several of them."

"Oh, to be sure, yet you know of one more bitter, more venomous than all others?" He tried to read her face. She sent a piercing glance upward.

"He had an enemy," she said sharply, "a man known as a Government spy!"

This extraordinary story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. A lot of strange and exciting things happen. Read it. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It only costs $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

HIS LANDLADY.

It was most surprising.

Young Jack Alton had left his boarding house with the avowed intention of taking a short stroll. This same boarding house, let it be understood, was an institution of long standing and eminent respectability.

Therefore imagine the surprise of the boarder of three years upon returning from his half-holiday jaunt to find his harborage a matter of past history. A great sign "To Let" had been nailed to the front door, and Alton's key admitted the startled youth to dusty, empty halls.

Again Alton sought the street to stare stupidly at the number above the door.

The suddenness of this flitting was beyond him. His brain refused to attempt the solving of the problem.

He drew his ego out of a mental vacuum to find that he had again entered the house and was shambling disconsolately about from one deserted room to another. Such shocks as this have disturbed the delicate adjustment of larger minds than the Alton property.

Alton was in love. He was smitten mightily with the charms of his landlady's daughter. Mrs. Darton, the mother, had apparently approved of him. There was no reason why she should not.

He was a clerk, to be sure, but he was earning good money and as high on the social scale as the Dartons. The woman had no reason to expect a better match for Gracia than this terribly-in-love young man.

Not that Gracia wasn't pretty enough for any one. Those who believe otherwise never saw her. She was a brunette. One of those tall, striking, dark creatures to be read about but seldom seen. She had hair as dusky as that of a wood-nymph, and the great eyes beneath the perfect brows were wells of liquid midnight.

If Gracia was a queen, then Alton was her most servile worshiper. Mrs. Darton watched his infatuation with a motherly and speculative eye.

Alton made a weary exit from the house. The "to let" sign flapped derisively in the face of the youth. Angrily he tore it down, wadded it up and heaved it into the gutter.

"How the deuce," he ruminated, "did that woman manage to pack up and get out of here in this most remarkable space of time —and wh[illegible]"

Mrs. Darton was a woman to have her say. There was no deceit about her. If she did not favor Alton he should have known it long before this; and then he would have been called upon to move—not she.

Even had Alton been unpopular with his prospective lady's mother, by all the rules of reciprocated love, Gracia should not have participated in this hasty departure. Gracia was of age. There was no excuse for her.

After a fruitless search in the outside mail box for a letter or note explaining, Alton strode angrily down the steps and toward the Little Gem.

The Little Gem was a picture show wherein Miss Gracia sang every afternoon and evening, and it had suddenly occurred to Alton that she might be as unaware of this flitting as he had been.

Although it was Saturday afternoon all days were alike to the handsome singer. Saturday was the biggest money getter of the week; there could be no half-holiday for her.

Alton swung, a strikingly good-looking youth, toward the little theater. His face had again resumed its normal optimistic expression, and his blue eyes beamed brightly at Diggs, the owner of the Little Gem, as he peered cheerfully through the ticket window. Diggs was his own ticket seller.

"Is Miss Gracia at work?" Diggs, heavily moustached, eyed the youth keenly.

"Naw," growled the theatorium proprietor. "She ain't been here this afternoon. Put me in a fine boat, she has, but then"—and in a softer tone—"th' girl's sick, o' course. She never laid down on the job before. Have a ticket and go in, won't you?"

Alton politely refused. Suddenly coming out of a reverie, he found himself before the deserted boarding house. Once again he entered the place.

Up and down du[illegible] [illegible]idors roamed the disconsolate Alton. At last, with a heavy sigh, he mounted the stairs. Through one room after another he wandered, hopelessly pondering the enigma.

Now he was in Gracia's room, the sweet idol of his heart whom, it suddenly occurred to him, he would never see again. His hurt heart ached terribly. He felt that he had never realized before how much he really loved her.

His dull eyes swept the floor, and—what were those white bits scattered about? There was writing on them. Alton stooped and gathered a few pieces of the torn paper in his hand.

It seemed to him that these had once been a letter impatiently destroyed by—whom? The delicate scent of the torn epistle told of but one person. Alton's pulses quickened. The broad, tell-tale scrawl, too, was eloquent of the girl who, in a few brief hours, had blotted herself completely out of his life. Alton gathered the precious bits, and holding them carefully in his hand, descended the stairs. Here might be some hint of what had become of his landlady and his love.

It seemed an hour to the impatient man before he could straighten the tangle. Even then great parts of it were missing.

Eagerly his eyes searched the letter, but before he could assimilate its contents a vagrant breeze stole in through some unseen crevice and whirled the paper into its former state of debris.

Alton smothered the oath at his tongue's end, and with his lips a taut, determined line, patiently regathered the wreck and began to match the chirography. In due time this was finished. His eyes eagerly gathered this piecemeal information:

"...going to——London. It comes all so unexpected, and....must get here before he dies. ——will—— Will write you dearest, as soon as we arrive....luck for us. Lovingly, GRACIA."

"London!" gasped Alton, and his face took on a most doleful look.

This letter was written to him. He knew this, but why had it been destroyed.

Had Gracia thought better of it and decided that it was best for them—for her—to forget? Had she come to the just conclusion that far-off London offered better opportunities in which it was better that Alton should not feature?

And why London?

Alton sat him down upon the rickety table and bowed his head in his hands. The harsh way that Fate had taken to thrust him apart from his love dazed him. His heart still throbbed with the dull, heavy pain

"Jack!"

The youth sprang from the table, his arms stretched out appealingly toward the apparition.

"Gracia!"

It was all very dramatic.

"Gracia, what does all this mean? Why have——"

The girl laughingly interrupted.

"One moment. I know it is very confusing to you, but, in reality, the explanation is simple.

"Now listen.

"Mother has—or had—a brother who is very rich—and very, very eccentric. He was against the idea of mother coming here and taking boarders. He wanted her to live in the old homestead near New London, Conn., and he recently wrote that he [illegible] willed her all his money and property if at his death she was installed, bag and baggage, in the New London h[illegible]

"Yesterday a telegram received from his doctor told her he was dying. She remembered the will. She knew she had to be firmly established in the old home at his death if she expected to inherit his money. This accounts for our rapid removal. With the aid of a dozen men we packed everything, and it is now on its way. Mother left for Chicago at once. Uncle lives there. I go to New London tonight."

Alton sighed in relief.

"Before you go, dear," he said determinedly, "you must marry me. I take no more chances."

Some Strange Dishes.

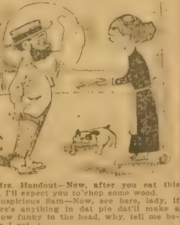
Among the most delicious tid-bits in South Africa is lion's flesh, which is in high favor among aborigines and certain classes of Boer trekkers. The tiger is eaten in many parts of India, not only for its edible qualities but also because it is supposed to impart strength and cunning. Bear's flesh, and especially smoked bears' tongues are most expensive delicacies in G[illegible]. Though many Europeans have declar[illegible] tastes like soft leather and mucilage, the flesh of the elephant is a favorable dish in Africa and India. A baked elephant's foot is a choice morsel.

In upper Egypt and Siam crocodile flesh is publicly sold as food, while in Santo Domingo and parts of Central America the cayman is eaten, roasted or boiled.

The green lizard, though Americans usually associate him with slime, is enthusiastically relished by many in the south of Italy and Spain. But they are not in it with the Greeks, who do not really relish their soup unless it has in it bits of adder. They are also very fond of the mud tortoise and drink its blood and cook its flesh and eggs. Of course the frog is well known in France and the continent, but it is by no means a stranger to the American palate.

In the dessert line it is also possible to enjoy a strange as[illegible] boiled in sugar and made into a preserve are eaten by Arabians, while in China candied rosebuds and jasmine flowers are equally popular. The common yellow lily that grows in marshes and ponds is utilized by the Turks as the main ingredient of an agreeable conserve which tastes something like brandy. Candied violets are of course very common in France, while in Roumania and Bulgaria many flowers are used for flavoring.

Forewarned.



Mrs. Handout—Now, after you eat this pie, I'll expect you to chop some wood.

Suspicious Sam—Now, see here, lady, if there's anything in dat pie dat'll make a fellow funny in the head, why, tell me before I eat [illegible]

Too Much Detail.

A much-bothered conductor on an east-bound car was asked by a chilly lady passenger to close the ventilators. As he had already been importuned to open them by half a dozen other patrons he resorted to diplomacy.

"Madam," he said in a confidential tone, "I'd gladly close the ventilators, but unfortunately a health officer is aboard the car and he insists that they must be left open. I'd make myself liable to a lot of trouble if I opposed him."

"A health officer?" said the lady.

"Yes'm," replied the conductor. And then, intoxicated by the success of his scheme, he unhappily added: "That's the man three seats ahead—the one with the brown derby."

The lady looked and a change came over her face.

"The one with the brown derby?" she repeated.

"Yes'm. They say he's quite an expert on germs and things. I believe he's a German gentleman."

The lady stared at the conductor.

"He's nothing of the kind," she snapped. "The man with the brown derby is my husband!"

Whereupon the conductor beat a hasty retreat.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

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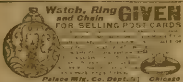

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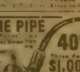

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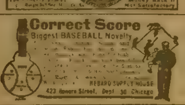

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BOYS'
AND
GIRLS'
CORNER

A BATTLE FOR A MINE;

Or, FIGHTING DESPERATE FOES

By WILL LISENBEE

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Begun in No. 12, March 19. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SURPRISED.

IT IS hardly necessary to say that Nathan Ray and companions were in the best of spirits. Having been successful in securing the valuable booty, and having accomplished the journey to the river without accident, they felt that they had much to be thankful for

"We have made a good haul," said Templeton as he rubbed his hands with satisfaction, "and so far our plans have prospered. We are now about to embark on the most pleasant part of our journey, leaving no trail behind us. Now, gentlemen, the first thing to be done is to rustle the cargo aboard the raft."

"That's right," agreed Wykoff, "and let every hand get to work."

They fell to the task with a will, and in a short time the bags of ore and provisions and other articles were carried aboard the large raft that lay snugly against the rocky wall of the shore.

When this had been done Wykoff drew a bottle from his pocket.

"This, gents," he said, "I have been keeping to administer to any unfortunate one of us who should be bitten by a snake——"

"I am bitten now," cried Templeton.

"And I," broke in Jessup.

"And I," echoed Ray.

"Then I may as well prepare to prescribe," went on Wykoff, passing the bottle. "Don't drink longer than you can hold your breath, and remember strong drink is killing its millions every year."

The bottle went round mid roars of laughter, and when it got back to the owner there was very little left.

"I see that you fellows have done your best to save me from a drunkard's grave," Wykoff remarked, as he surveyed the remaining liquor in the bottle. "Thank you, gents," he added as he drained the bottle. "Now shall we go aboard?"

"Not till we have breakfasted," said Ray. "I have eaten nothing since yesterday noon, and it must be almost daylight. Suppose we take a bite before going aboard, as we can't very well manage to cook while going down that rapid stream."

"I'm agreed," said Wykoff, and the rest gave assent.

One kindled a fire while others brought the grub bags from the raft and set the coffee to boiling.

The first streaks of dawn were lighting the eastern horizon when, having finished eating and tumbled the traps aboard, the four got aboard the raft, threw off the fastening and drifted out into the stream.

Wykoff stood up on the stern of the craft, waving an adieu to the little burros that had been left on the shore to shift for themselves.

"Good luck to you," he said, "you have served us well, and now we offer you your liberty and a season of rest."

As the craft swung around into the stream Templeton drew a bottle from his pocket and passed it around.

"Let us drink to the success of our voyage," he said, and as they drained the bottle they grew merry.

Ray started a song in which the others joined with voices more or less out of tune. And so they were swept rapidly on their way, while the dawn widened and the fiery beam of the morning sun fell over the stream, turning its whole surface to shimmering gold.

As they proceeded, the current grew more rapid, and the clumsy craft was soon running at a rate of ten miles an hour.

"This beats a burro pack train a whole lot," remarked Ray, as he stood guiding the craft with a clumsy oar made from a willow. "We shall land at our haven of rest long before ten o'clock if we keep up this speed."

"If we don't all go to the bottom in some rapids below," finished Templeton.

"Have no fear of that," assured Wykoff. "I have been over every foot of this stream between here and our destination, and we shall have an easy and safe voyage if we keep our eyes open."

They were now running within a hundred feet of the left shore of the river, and as Ray turned to thrust his oar into the water, he stopped abruptly and stood as if transfixed.

What he saw caused his face to turn of an ashen hue, and for a moment he stood as if paralyzed, hardly able to credit the evidence of his senses.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RETURN

The face of Nathan Ray was turned in the direction of the piles of bags filled with ore, on which had been thrown a tent, some blankets and other camp equipage.

Suddenly he saw a movement in the midst of the cargo, and the next instant the muzzle of a rifle protruded as the flap of the tent, that lay over the bags, was thrown back, and behind it appeared the face of—Frank Stetson! Almost simultaneously the face of Mark Huber appeared, and with it the blue steel of a .45.

The form of Nathan Ray shook with terror. The oar fell from his hand, and a gasp came from his lips.

"Don't make any bad move, but jump out and swim ashore!"

It was the voice of Frank Stetson, and the resolute gleam in his eyes told that he was in no frame of mind to be trifled with.

Templeton and the two others turned quickly, and as their eyes fell on the boys, fortified behind the bags of ore, the deadly weapons flashing in the sun, they gave vent to a string of oaths. But they were too greatly amazed to offer resistance. And while they hesitated, again the voice of Frank Stetson rang clear and distinct:

"Off of this raft, every one of you, or I'll have to bore you through!"

As he spoke, the sharp crack of Frank's repeating rifle cut sharply above the rush of the waters, and a bullet cut through the rim of Wykoff's hat.

Without a word Wykoff leaped from the raft and struck out for the shore. Ray followed, but Templeton, with a muttered oath, took a step as if to advance. Leaping to one side, he was in the very act of rushing upon the two youths when his foot came in contact with the oar lying on the raft. It tripped, he reeled, and with a fearful oath, pitched over the side of the raft and fell into the water.

Seeing that the battle was lost, he struck out for the shore, while Jessup, finding himself alone, facing the muzzle of Frank's rifle, followed his companions without a word.

In a moment the raft had swept on, leaving the four men battling with the waters, and Frank and Mark in possession of the raft.

"We are well quit of them now," said Mark, as he slipped his pistol into his belt and took up the oar and began to direct the raft toward the center of the stream. "We are in luck, Frank, and your daring plan has worked like a charm."

"Oh, we didn't have much risk to run," remarked Frank. "Once we got aboard the raft and slipped out of sight among the cargo, we had the whole outfit up a tree. It was the easiest thing in the world to get the drop on them, and they had the good judgment to see the point and give up."

The four men had by this time reached the shore, where they drew themselves up on the shelving rocks like so many half-drowned rats—presenting a decidedly woebegone spectacle.

"It will take them an hour to climb those cliffs out there," said Mark, "and by that time we shall be well away from any danger from them. Besides, they are in no position to make any hostile move. They may have their pistols, but their rifles, as well as those taken from Fenton and me, are now in our possession, and we surely have the whip hand of them."

"I don't think they will attempt to follow us," said Frank, "but it will do them but little good if they should."

As the raft swept around a bend in the river the four men could be seen standing on the shelving rock, wringing the water from their garments.

It was Frank's suggestion that he and Mark should steal aboard the raft while the men were preparing their early morning meal, and fortunately they were successful in getting aboard without being seen.

Fortune had favored them in the hazardous undertaking, and they now found themselves not only rid of the enemy, but in possession of the treasure and other articles plundered from the camp.

The question that now presented itself was an important one. How should they dispose of the cargo? It would be necessary to conceal it somewhere till such a time as they could arrange to convey the treasure to the nearest mills.

Two or three miles farther down the stream the raft was run in near the shore into quiet waters and brought to a stop. The bottom was then tested and found to be of rock, and the bags of ore were dropped into four feet of water.

Then the raft was allowed to drift on, and a mile below it was put ashore on the opposite side to that on which Ray and his companions had been left. Here the provisions and other articles were carried ashore and concealed in a sort of grotto, and covered with rocks. When this was done the raft was cast adrift and was carried away in the rapid current.

"I guess we have got everything pretty securely stored," remarked Frank. "It will be as easy to find a needle in a haystack as to locate the bags of ore, and as for the rest of the cargo, we can take the risk of their ever finding it. And now, what next?"

Mark reflected a moment.

"I was just thinking that one of us should remain here and keep guard over things, but after all it will hardly be necessary. I think it would be best for both of us to strike the back trail and see what has become of Dick Fenton."

"You are right. Fenton will probably follow the trail to the river, and there is little doubt that he will find the note we left for him. As we fastened it to a stake directly in the trail it is not likely he will miss finding it. If he should find it, he'll be sure to round up the burros left there, and then wait for us to show up. I think we had better hit the back trail right away."

They proceeded to fill their haversacks with provisions, and taking their rifles, they set out up the river, keeping well back from the stream so as to avoid being seen by Ray and his companions, who were probably prowling along the opposite shore.

They traveled steadily till dark, and then they stopped for an hour to rest and partake of a lunch from their haversacks. Then they resumed their journey, but it was near midnight when they arrived at the place from which the raft had been started on its voyage.

They made a hasty search for Fenton, and soon came upon him, a short distance from the river. He was reclining on a bed of pine boughs, calmly smoking his pipe, while nearby were the smouldering embers of a fire he had kindled.

He got up and gave the boys a hearty greeting as they came hurrying up the trail from the river.

"By George, I'm glad to see you back," he cried. "Come up to the fire and warm yourselves. These canyons are as cold as ice after the sun goes down. What luck?"

"The best in the world," cried Mark, and he gave a brief account of their adventures, the concealment aboard the raft, the manner in which Ray and his conspirators were disposed of, and what followed. "We have got everything safely cached till we can return," Mark added, "and I think my worthy kinsman and his outfit are out of the game."

"You have done a fine piece of work," cried Fenton, grasping the boys' hands. "By George, I'd have given a good deal to have seen the faces of those gents when they were forced to swim ashore and know they were beaten by a couple of boys."

Mark now gave more specific details of what they had done with the bags of ore and the remainder of the cargo.

"There is not the slightest chance that the ore could be found by Ray and his

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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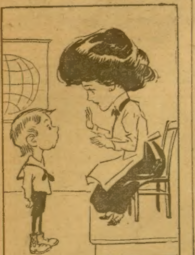


Teacher—Johnny, what makes the grass grow?

Johnny—The grass has blades, an' with these it cuts its way through the ground.

◆

Touched His Heart.

A man who was a great lover of nature and to whom a beautiful view appealed far more strongly than a good dinner, was out walking among the hills near Tarrytown one day with two companions, one of whom seldom troubled himself to look beyond his nose.

"Now, Jenkins," said the man enthusiastically to this prosaic individual, "when we've climbed this hill you'll see the most beautiful prospect your eyes ever looked upon."

With some difficulty the ponderous Jenkins kept pace with his friends as they ascended the steep slope. At the summit they all paused and the man, with glowing eyes, said "Look!" And Jenkins did look with such an absorbed and concentrated gaze that the other two nudged each other and said: "Ah, he does feel the loveliness of the scene. Jenkins has some sense of the bautiful, after all," and they were silent and let him feast his eyes upon the glorious prospect.

"Well," said the man at last, "what do you think of it?"

"Oh," responded Jenkins, aroused with a start as from a dream of bliss, "do you know, I've been counting the cars in that freight train that passed down in the valley—there are forty-one."

◆

Compact Quarters.

It was the tiniest of tiny flats.

"Yes, sir," said the maid, "the stork arrived with a fine baby boy."

"Great Josephus!" exclaimed Mr. Flatte, who had been away on a trip. "That means more room. Have you hung the broom in the air shaft?"

"Yes, sir."

"And trimmed the leaves of the rubber plant down to one-half their normal size?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then take the pet dog to the fancier's and have his tail cut off. We must economize room some way. Thank goodness it wasn't twins."

◆

Curiosity Indeed.

It was in the museum.

"Those, sir," announced the guide as he stopped before a glass case, "are the eggs of an American condor. They were found 5,000 feet above the sea level."

The visitor removed his hat with a grave bow.

"Why do you remove your hat?" asked the guide, curiously.

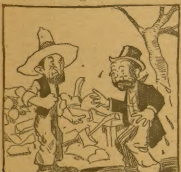
"Out of respect."

"Respect?"

"Yes, respect for any egs that could have been higher than the eggs of the barnyard hen."

◆

Piling It On.



Gritty George—Going to make me saw half a cord of wood for a night's lodging in your old barn? Why, the roof leaked and I got soaking wet before morning.

Hard-Hearted Farmer—Then you'll have to saw a whole cord. You had lodging with bath.

GLADNESS ON THE WAY.

There's green upon the hillsides, the willow's branches glow;
The robin's out there singing, the buds begin to show;
The April winds are blowing last summer's leaves away——
The world becomes a little more pleasant every day.

There's warbling in the hedges, the valleys ring with song,
The sun gets busy early and stays on duty long;
There's a piping in the marshes, the children shout and play;
The world becomes a little more pleasant every day.

The bridge whist clubs are ending their labors for the year;
Along the muddy highways dry spots will soon appear;
The maiden in the hammock ere long will blithely sway;
The world become little more pleasant every day.

◆

Time to Quit.

"How's farming, old man?" asked the windmill salesman on the station platform at Gooseneck Junction.

"Gone to the dogs," sighed the big freckled chap with the yellow valise. "I just plumb give up and am going to town. Had a cabbage farm and thought I was going to make a fortune until Jed Hale started a snail farm, and the blamed critters ate all my cabbage."

"That was tough."

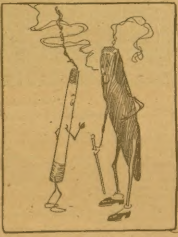
"Yes, but I tried to get even. I started a frog farm and the frogs swallowed all of his snails."

"Well, you got satisfaction, anyway, old man?"

"Only for a while. Jed got so all fired hot under the collar blamed if he didn't start a snake farm, and in two days they had swallowed every frog in sight. Yeas, stranger, I reckon I am out of the farming business for good and all."

◆

Badinage.



Cigarette—You are nothing but a cheap 5-cent cigar!

Cigar—All right, but they take what's left of me and make you out of it.

◆

Swift Motoring.

William B. Hibbs, the Washington broker, has a big country place just outside of Leesburg, Va. He put a large searchlight on top of his stone water tower and from time to time, at night, amuses himself by throwing the light around the country.

One night in the summer Hibbs was on the tower playing with the searchlight. A Virginian, driving a skittish team, hitched to a surrey, in which there were two ladies, was coming along a road leading to Leesburg and was about four miles from the village.

Hibbs threw his searchlight down the road.

"Gosh darn it!" exclaimed the Virginian, "here comes one of those pesky automobiles." He jumped out and took the horses by the heads. The light continued on the road for half a minute and then was switched away. The Virginian stood stupefied. Then he turned to the ladies and said, in an awed voice: "Jerusalem! That automobile must be going fast. It's gone by, and I didn't even see it!"

◆

Real Industrious.

"You lazy man!" said the irate housewife, shaking her broom; "what do you mean by stretching out under that tree for two hours? You told me if I gave you two or three of my husband's best cigars you would do some work."

"Well, mum, can't yer see I am working wid might an' main?" drawled Sandy Pikes, as he blew a series of blue rings over his head.

"Working? What are you doing?"

"Why, mum, I'm killing de caterpillars in dis tree. If yer'll get me several more of dem good cigars I'll kill all de caterpillars in de orchard."

◆

AN AERIAL CRIPPLE.

"The aeroplane awaits without, sir."
"Without what, my faithful James?"
"Without its wings and steering strings,
Without its bamboo frames;
Without its keel and motor wheel,
A sight, indeed, to see,
Without a doubt, it's all without——
And hanging up a tree!"

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A Battle for a Mine.

(Continued from page twelve.)

party," he added, "even if they should search for it a month. Besides, should they discover it, they would have no way of getting off with it, and I am of the opinion that they will hit the trail out of here and we shall not be troubled with them again."

"You are quite right," nodded Fenton. "We may as well dismiss them from our minds and make our plans accordingly."

"Did you find the message we left?" Mark asked.

"Oh, yes. That is why I am here. I could see no use in attempting to follow you after learning from your brief message that you had, in all probability, taken passage on the raft with the robbers. I considered it a dangerous thing to do, and I would have advised you against it if I had had the chance, but it was too late then. But everything has worked out for the best. Besides, as good luck would have it, I found all the burros near here when I arrived, and they are all in a little valley across the hill to the east. And now, boys, if you have any grub with you I'd like to see it, for I have eaten nothing since we went into camp thirty-six hours ago."

"You shall be supplied right away," cried Frank, tossing a well-filled haversack to the prospector.

While Fenton tackled the grub, they talked over their plans for the morrow, and it was decided that after they had obtained much needed rest they would start on their journey down the river, taking the burros with them so that the bags of ore could be conveyed to the nearest mills.

They threw themselves on the pine boughs, after replenishing the fire to keep off the chill of the night air, and were soon asleep.

CHAPTER XX.
AT RAWHIDE CITY.

Two days later, near the middle of the afternoon, Dick Fenton and the two boys, driving the little pack train of eight burros before them, entered the town of Rawhide City.

The flourishing mining camp consisted of rude shanties, box houses and a few frame buildings, standing in irregular rows and scattered hither and thither along the valley and clinging to the steep mountain side as if blown thither by some passing wind.

Few people were visible along the crooked streets, for, like the average mining camp of the West, Rawhide City only awoke to the throbs of commercial activity as the shadows of night approached.

A few men loitering in front of a saloon, looked with sudden interest at the heavily laden burros, and an old man, more inquisitive than the rest, hailed Fenton.

"What have ye got thar?" he asked.

"Some rocks?" replied Fenton good-humoredly.

"Are they perty rich?"

"That is what we're going to find out."

"Strike it near here?"

"No."

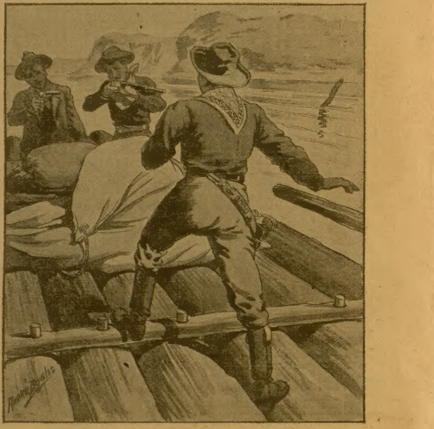
Fenton flashed a quick glance at the stranger. There was something familiar in his appearance. Where had he seen him before? he asked himself, as he moved on.

The old man turned to say something to his companions, and as Mark stepped to Fenton's side he was also trying to remember when and where he had seen the stranger.

"Did you recognize that man?" Mark asked of Fenton.

"I was just trying to remember where I had seen him," replied Fenton. "By George! I have it! It was Mountain Joe!"

"Why, that's who it is!" cried Mark. "I couldn't remember who he was till you mentioned the name. I wonder if he recognized us?"



"Jump out and swim ashore!"

"I don't know. He didn't act much as if he had."

"That's what I was thinking. Do you suppose he will try to hatch any trouble for us?"

"I don't see how he can very well. Once we have delivered the ore to the mills it will be safe, and when we get the gold later, we can have it shipped by express to any point we desire."

"I wonder if Ray and the other three are in Rawhide City?"

"I hardly think so, but it would make little difference to us."

On arriving at the mills, Fenton sought out the foreman, who came out to inspect the ore.

"It looks good," he said, "so good that I could hardly venture to guess at its richness. Was it brought from a distance?"

"Some fifty miles," replied Fenton. "It is a new mine. We have had samples assayed, but that is not always a sure test, as you know. We want this run through your mill, and then we shall be able to tell how it is going to pan out."

"We can't get to it before tomorrow," said the foreman.

"That will do."

The ore was brought in and placed in a bin to wait its turn, and the foreman continued to examine it.

"By thunder!" he cried, "this looks rich! Unless I miss my guess, this is the best ore that has been brought to the mills. Are you the owner of the mine?"

"No, it belongs to the boy here—Mark Huber, whose father discovered the mine nearly a year ago."

"Well, you are a lucky boy," cried the foreman, turning to Mark. "If this stuff pans out as I think, there will be a big rush to the place where your mine is located as soon as it is known."

"My friends have staked all the adjoining claims," smiled Mark, "and we shall not object to any others who may come to stake claims."

"That is the right spirit," nodded the foreman. "I wish you success."

"We have a little stuff we got out of a sort of pocket which is better than the ore taken from the regular vein," Mark said. "It might be well to give us a special bin for it."

The bags containing the gold taken from the pocket were brought in and opened. The foreman took up a small piece and examined it, a look of utter amazement coming over his face.

"Great Caesar! it is almost pure gold!" he gasped. "Ye gods! but this is wonderful—wonderful!"

He went to the office door and called the superintendent, a portly individual, who came in smoking a big black cigar.

"What is it, Tom?" he asked.

"First look at this ore," said the foreman, and he placed a piece of the quartz taken from the vein in the superintendent's hand.

"Why, that looks pretty good," was his comment. "Have these gentlemen made a new strike somewhere?"

"I should rather say that they had," nodded the foreman. "But you haven't seen the best specimens yet. Just take a squint at this," and he dropped a piece of the almost pure gold into the other's hand.

The superintendent took it and turned it over carefully in his hand, weighed it in his fingers and then turned to the foreman with a laugh.

"What sort of a joke is this you are trying to play on me?" he asked. "This is almost pure gold itself."

For reply the foreman opened the mouth of the sack for the other's inspection.

The superintendent put his hands into the bag, and as he bent over to examine the contents, an exclamation of amazement escaped his lips.

"Gentlemen," he said with visible emotion, "this is the biggest thing in Arizona! By heavens, I never saw anything quite so good! You surely have struck a mountain of gold!"

"Hardly a mountain," smiled Mark. "It was merely a pocket, and we got it all."

"No matter," said the superintendent, "where this came from is bound to prove a regular bonanza. By George, the very sight of it is enough to stampede Rawhide City in a body for the new mines. We had better put this stuff in my private office. It would never do to risk leaving it where it can be seen. Why, a fellow could run away with a fortune in his pockets!"

"It is the real stuff and no doubt," sanctioned the foreman. "I think I shall hand in my resignation and go back with these gentlemen, if they don't object."

The superintendent scratched his chin reflectively.

"How far is it from here?" he asked, turning to Mark.

"Over fifty miles, I should judge," Mark replied.

He turned to the foreman with a smile.

"I think I shall have to go with you, if the gentlemen will allow us," he said. "By thunder! this is enough to excite a mummy."

CHAPTER XXI.
CONCLUSION.

The next day Mark Huber received something over two thousand ounces of gold from the mills, of the value of nearly forty thousand dollars.

It was immediately conveyed secretly to the express office, where it was shipped to Denver, consigned to Mark Huber, Dick Fenton, Ellis Filter, and Frank Stetson.

"This is the first output of the Whispering Pine," said Mark, "and without the help of my friends I should not have had it, so I have decided to divide the whole amount equally among the four of us, and have billed it to the whole bunch so that if anything should happen to any of us the others can claim their share."

"Holy smoke!" cried Frank, grasping Mark's hand. "I feel like a robber to take it."

"But for you, my worthy kinsman and his gentlemen robbers would have gotten away with the whole outfit," said Mark, "when they got the stuff aboard the raft. It was your plan that saved the day and your nerve that carried out the plan."

"Oh, Lord, don't give me the big head by such bouquets as that," implored Frank. "The whole business has been nothing but a jolly lark for me. But won't my guardy open his eyes and think I'm the whole thing when he learns of this? I shouldn't be surprised if he sent me a remittance at once."

Fenton was visibly affected by the generosity of Mark.

"You are the most wonderful boy I ever ment," he said, as he grasped the youth's hand.

"But you seem to forget that I am only giving the reward to where it belongs," insisted Mark. "Now suppose we hit the trail back to the Whispering Pine? Mr. Filter is probably getting lonesome by this time."

"It seems as if we shall have company," said Fenton. "I understand that a big crowd will accompany us back to the mine."

"The more the merrier," laughed Mark. "We shall now be free from any danger of further trouble from my uncle and his pals, and we can go to work on our claims without being disturbed."

"That's right," said Frank, "The crowd

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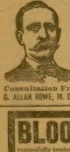

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"All right," laughed Mark. "We shall remember your promise."

That evening they started on the return

To the readers of this story the Editor of the Ledger wishes to say that another splendid story for boys will begin next week. It is called "Hot-Headed Henry," and tells of the strange bad and good luck of a youth who had a hot temper. You will find the story lots of fun as well as very exciting. Be sure and read it.

The end.

THE CANCELLED DEBT.

BY GERTRUDE MYDDLETON BUTLER.

I was standing with my back to the fireplace, glancing at the headlines in the evening paper. Suddenly I laid it down, and looked across the room to where my wife sat at her writing table, addressing the invitations to our forthcoming at home.

"Di," I said, "I want to speak to you."

"One moment, Jack," she answered, without looking up. All her life Di had expected to be waited for. The evening noises of the city came through the closely curtained windows. At Di's elbow stood a small table crowded with silver trifles; on a chair opposite lay the latest novel and a piece of embroidery. She took another sheet of note paper.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you, Di," I said slowly, "but what I have to say is important."

"Has Charles given notice, after all?"

She looked up quickly as she spoke, her pen held over the inkstand. Charles was my man. Di had a way of counting those things important which nearly affected herself; she obviously gave me credit for doing the same.

"Charles will have no further opportunities of giving notice," I said. "The fact is, we've come to—the end."

"To the end?" Di repeated with a puzzled frown.

"Absolutely," I replied firmly, gazing at the opposite wall.

"I don't understand," she exclaimed petulantly, blotting an envelope. "The end of what?"

"Our money."

"Can't we retrench?" she said absently.

So far she had barely paid me the compliment of attention. I must make her understand.

"My dear girl," I said firmly, "it's not a question this time of giving fewer dinners, or even selling the automobile. It's a question of selling everything."

"Jack!" she cried in dismay. I had her attention at last. She turned on her chair, facing me, a frightened look in her eyes.

"I'm awfully sorry, Di," I said lamely.

"It's rather futile to be sorry, isn't it?" she remarked, with careless cruelty. "It's done now."

"Perhaps it is futile," I retorted. "But it seemed the correct thing to say."

"We haven't spent much time lately in—saying the correct thing," she said with a short laugh. It was not a pleasant laugh. Unfortunately, it was growing more frequent after five years of marriage.

"Look here, Di," I began hurriedly, "we've made a most infernal muddle—I'm sorry."

"Oh, don't apologize. I quite agree; it is a muddle."

I bit my lip. Her face wore an expression I hated to see. She was too young to be cynical.

"Di," I said quickly, "there oughtn't to be a muddle. It's only because we each go separate ways, and they happen to be rather expensive ways."

"No more expensive than other people's," she replied.

"Perhaps not, only other people may manage to pay for theirs; I can't," I said dryly.

"How long have you known this?" she asked, with tightened lips.

"I didn't know till this morning that things were hopeless," I evasively answered.

"You must have known something before this. Why didn't you tell me?" she insisted.

Since she asked for the truth, she should have it.

"I didn't tell you, Di," I began slowly, "because, in the first place, I was a fool; and because, in the second place, I thought that in the midst of your festivities, and—and flirting"—I hated myself for saying it when I saw her wince—"I thought that you wouldn't understand."

Five years before, we had spoken exultingly together of the perfect understanding between us. Di was making aimless little lines with her pen.

"Well, we've had our day, like the dog," she said shortly. "What do you propose to do now that it's over?"

"I shall go West, anywhere—Oregon, probably—and work," I said recklessly.

Di laughed. Perhaps it did sound ridiculous.

"My dear boy," she remarked slowly, "rather preposterous, isn't it? And might I ask what sort of—'work' you propose doing?"

"Any sort," I replied, still more recklessly. "I'm strong enough, and young enough."

"And what do you propose that I should do?" she asked, after a short silence.

I hesitated. The pink shade of the electric lamp shed an alluring softness over her white dress and delicate profile. She looked eminently feminine.

"Di——" I began hurriedly, when she interrupted me.

"What suggestions have you on the subject?" she asked.

"I had thought of a small house in a New Jersey village," I answered, avoiding her eyes.

She made no reply. I thought of a certain summer afternoon in Atlantic City, and of our plans to have a riverside cottage. I looked up at her; she was studying the nib of her pen, and there was a strained look on her dear face I had not seen before. Perhaps she also remembered that summer afternoon.

"You see, Di," I said gently—anything to take that look from her face—"you see, as soon as things were better you might come out to Oregon, or we might decide to live somewhere in a suburb of New York City. I've been working it all out, and I think we can manage to keep Henriette."

I had a sudden recollection of Di as I had seen her that morning, struggling with a refractory veil and calling in distracted tones for her maid.

"Oh, of course, I couldn't possibly do without Henriette—here," she said slowly.

I looked up; something in the tone of her voice struck me. She could not mean——But, no—that, of course, was impossible.

"I'm very sorry. I wish you'd believe it, Di," I said again awkwardly; "it seems so much more stupid when we both know that if we had only pulled together it needn't have happened."

"My dear Jack," she exclaimed in a hard voice, "for heaven's sake don't say you are sorry again. Everything in this world has to be paid for, even the mistakes, and they are apt to be expensive. It's one of the little sweets of life. Unfortunately our account for mistakes has——"

"Run on for five years," I interrupted dryly, "and is not paid yet."

"We shall live through it, no doubt," she said shortly, "you in Oregon—I in that riverside cottage—with Henriette. The arrangement is quite admirable," she added, with a slight movement of her head.

"I think it ought to work all right," I rejoined, with a forced cheerfulness. I knew it would not.

Di looked up. "You will, of course, be traveling for your health," she said satirically. "I shall be—hadn't it better be something of the same sort—say, a rest cure?"

"As you like. I'll leave it to you to put a good face on our movements," I said, looking across at her. She was tidying away her letters, and her back was turned to me.

"Then it's all settled, Di," I said, with a quick sigh. "We shall both be busy, I suppose. There'll be the sale to arrange about later on. Let me know any wishes you may have about it, won't you? I'm going to the club now."

She was still sorting her letters, and I wanted some sign that she cared, that she was sorry. "Di, can't you speak, can't you say something?"

She kept her back to me, and was perfectly silent.

I walked to the door, and then paused.

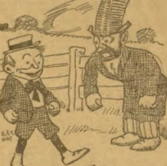
"Then there is nothing more to be said?" I asked, with my hand on the doorknob.

"No," she said slowly—"no, there's nothing more to be said, except"—with a quick movement she switched off the electric light on the table, and turned to me with a little sob—"except—that I'm going with you to Oregon."

"Di!" I cried incredulously.

Our five years' account was paid, after all.

The Reason.



Cranky Coggway—What you grinnin' at, young feller? I'll slap yer face fust thing ye know!

Willie—Aw, I was late to school and expect to get a licking anyway when I get home. I'm just getting ready to grin and bear it, so I don't care what you do.

Gentle Hint.

Dick—So you told George you would never allow any one but him to kiss you on the cheek?"

Dolly—"Yes, but I have two cheeks."

A Modern Flat.

Friend (looking over Brown's unfurnished flat)—And what is this passageway for?

Brown—Passageway! Great scott, this is the dining room!

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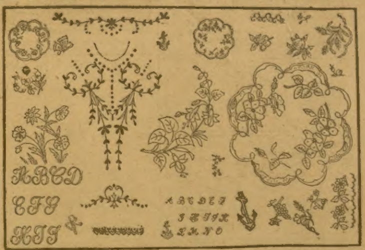

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For Youthful Eyes

CARPENTER AND TYRANTS.

"Build us a barn!" they said to me,
And so I built them a barn, in glee,
"Horse barn, cow barn, hay barn, too,
Hen house, pig pen, that will do."

"A house for us!" the tyrants cry,
And so I built one wide and high.
Balconies broad and turetted roof,
'Gainst wind and lightning warranted proof.

Sidewalks, fences, trees I build—
Was ever a carpenter so crafty and skilled?
"What pay?" "What pay?" the tyrants cry,
As I finish my work with a happy sigh.

I glance at the clock. 'Tis half-past two.
I've worked a good half-hour for you.
Thirty minutes I've been your slave—
Thirty kisses from each I crave!

Thirty kisses from each of you,
Paid to me now, in a minute or two!
A rush, a frolic, a step inside—
Alas for the carpenter's boastful pride!
House, barn, wind-mill, green trees high—
All in shapeless ruin lie!
Dominoes, checkers, chess-men, too—
Was there ever seen such a helpless crew.

Tears, sighs, sobs, for a moment; and then,
"Never mind! Uncle will build them again!"

Young Giantess' Toy.

In olden times a race of giants is said to have lived in Alsace. Castle Niedeck in the valley of the Breusch was their residence, but even the ruins of this fortress have long since disappeared. The legend remains, however, to assure us that they were a peaceable people, well disposed to mankind.

The daughter of the master of the castle was one day walking idly through the neighboring wood. When she drew near the fields and meadows of the valley she perceived a peasant plowing. The young giantess looked with much astonishment at the tiny man who seemed to be so busily engaged trudging along after his small team. She never before had seen anything so wonderful, and the sight of it amused her greatly.

She thought that she had found a nice little toy, and she clapped her hands with childish glee, so that the echo sounded among the mountains; then, picking up man, horse and plow, she placed them in her apron and hurried back to the castle. There, greatly pleased, she showed her father the nice little toy she had found.

But the giant shook his enormous head slowly and said in displeasure:

"Don't you know, child, who this trembling little creature with his struggling, tiny animal is? You consider it a plaything, but of all the dwarfs that dwell in the valley below he is the most useful. He works hard, in scorching heat as well as in windy cold weather, so that the fields may produce fruit for us. He who scoffs at him or mistreats him will be punished by heaven. So you must take the little laborer back to the place where you found him."

The young giantess, greatly ashamed and deeply blushing with embarrassment, put the amusing little toy back into her apron and carried it obediently down to the valley.

The King's X.

Every boy or girl who ever played a game of tag knows what it means when some one during the game calls out, "Fen tagging me; I have my fingers crossed." It means, of course, that it's not fair to tag the player who says this, and that he's perfectly safe to do as he pleases.

Although we all know what this means, I wonder how many have heard the origin of the quaint custom?

Years and years ago, in the times when men wore heavy iron clothes and iron pots for hats, and people like Robin Hood really lived outside of story books, men were wild and lawless. Education was sadly neglected, and about the only thing that men really knew well was how to fight and to defend their rights.

The poor stood little chance of justice, for the law courts were few and far between, and seldom fair; and so by some of the higher class people who had learned to know some law and order, places of refuge were provided for the persecuted poor. These sanctuaries were called the "King's Cross," or the "King's X," and it is from these that the boys and girls of today get the idea of making a cross with their fingers as a sign of safety.

Catching Monkeys.

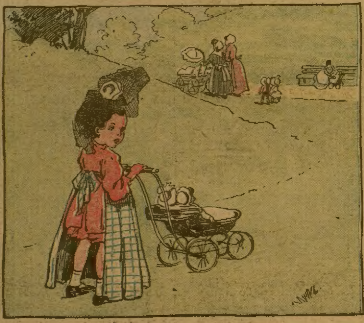
In the Philippine Islands the natives catch monkeys in a curious way.

The monkeys are fond of the meat of cocoanuts, which grow as plentifully there as apples do in our country. They are lazy, though, about gnawing through the outer bark, and will only do so when exceedingly hungry. The natives take advantage of their greed and indolence by cutting a small opening through the shell, just large enough for Mr. Monkey's long, thin hand to penetrate.

When he once gets inside, he gets his hands full of delicious, dainty meat, and his hand is naturally wider in this act than when it entered. Finding his hand will not come out, the monkey chatters and scolds, plainly showing his indignation at the way he has been trapped, but never thinks of loosening his hold on the cocoanut and withdrawing his hand as easily as he put it in. There he stands, an angry monkey, until the man who set the cocoanut trap comes and takes him captive.

A small boy's idea of greatness isn't the same as his mother's idea of it.

A LITTLE MOTHER.



"Do you suppose they can tell I'm not grown up?"

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